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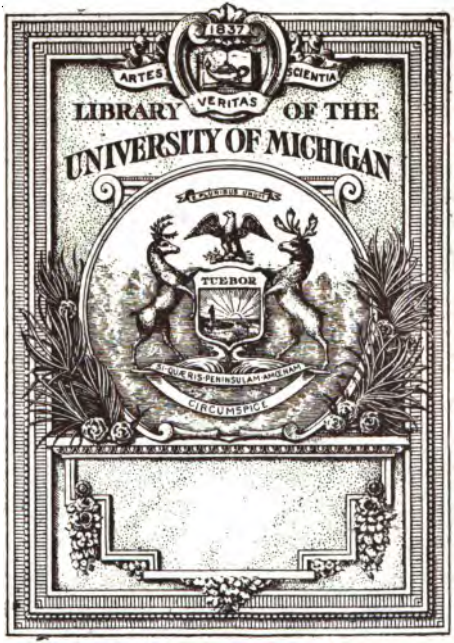
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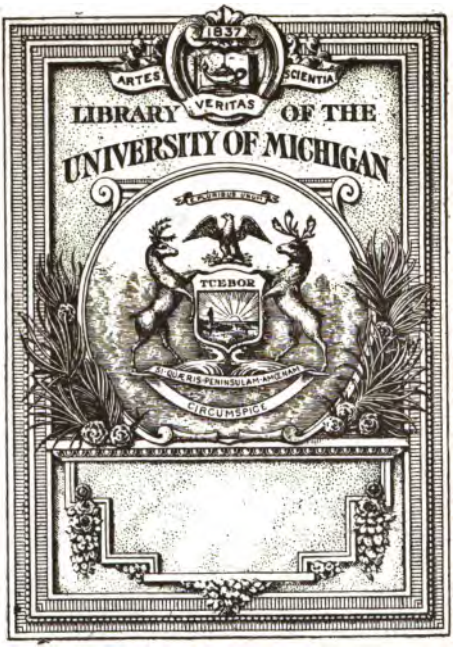
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THE TRUTH ABOUT

Secular Education

ITS HISTORY AND RESULTS

BY
JOSEPH McCABE
(FORMERLY RECTOR OF
ST. BERNARDINE'S COLLEGE, BUCKINGHAM)

LONDON:
WATTS & CO.,
17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.
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PREFACE

THE aim of the following essay is to elucidate several points n connection with our system of education about which the most improper and injurious fallacies are current among us.

Various circumstances have forced the question of education upon our notice at the present time. The settlement of 1870 could not aim to be a final and ideal scheme, because it had to effect a compromise between religious sects, whose strength and fortunes were subject to variation. A good compromise has been well defined as a manœuvre by which you take all you can get of a good thing, and wait until you can get more. The two parties to the compromise in 1870 may be described as the party that wanted much religious dogma taught in the schools and the party that would be content with little; a third party, that desired the total exclusion of religious dogma, was then too small to have a share in the deal. The event that thus brought the idea of a settlement once more into the practical area is that one of these parties—the ultra-dogmatic or denominational bodies—is considered by the other to have obtained undue favour at the hands of the late Government. Once more the war-cries of the contending parties resound in the land, and a new compromise is said to be inevitable.

In the meantime the third party has been steadily growing. Clerical influence has shrunk in the most remarkable manner during the last thirty years. Rationalism has, to judge from the enormous success of its publications, attained a very considerable power. The organisation of the workers has revealed a strong feeling among the millions—as shown in the vote of

Trade Union Congresses—to sever our educational system entirely from the teaching of sects. A large number of educationists, scholars, and politicians have declared that the time has come for the complete secularisation of our elementary schools.

My essay has been written for those perplexed readers, of every school, who desire to have a full and clear statement of the facts before they help to commit the nation to another thirty years of compromise. The issue is fraught with the most serious consequences to the country, for no Government is likely to make any further drastic interference with our educational scheme for decades to come. No doubt there may be changes in the interest of particular sects with the oscillations of the political pendulum ; and those changes will lead to bitter recrimination with the return of the opposed party. But if we decide for compromise now, we shall have compromise in some form or other for another generation.

I offer in the following pages some serious and carefully compiled material bearing on the situation. It seems to be of importance, in determining our whole attitude towards the clerical schools, to examine the historical development of education, and see how the clergy came to exercise the control they do over our schools. The next point that requires careful elucidation is the outcome of purely secular education in the countries which have as yet adopted it. Here the reader will find a sufficient correction of the reckless calumnies that are being so assiduously circulated. Finally, I offer a few considerations, largely based on my own observations as a teacher and a theologian, on the use of the Bible in the school, and a number of facts that may help the puzzled reader to decide how far the country is generally prepared to accept a scheme of purely secular education. J. M.

Chapter I.

EDUCATION IN PAGAN AND IN CHRISTIAN DAYS

When Mommsen wrote his famous history of Rome he was moved to protest against the current "prejudice" that the ancient Republic was far behind his own time in the matter of education. "Even among the slaves," he said, "a large proportion could read and write." And no one who has ever visited the disinterred city of Pompeii would fail to realise the justice of his protest. For fifteen centuries the peasants who have tended their vines about the feet of Vesuvius have been grossly illiterate. For so long a time that it has seemed an immemorial tradition, the art of reading and writing has been regarded by them, and by their fellows all over Europe, as an elaborate attainment that befitted only the leisure of the monk or the dogmatic duty of the priest. Even long after the invention of printing the ability to read was confined within very narrow limits.

It must have given a shock to the feeling of many a Neapolitan worker when the great pall of lava was at length dragged from the fair face of the ruined city, and he learned that his fellows of nearly two thousand years ago could read and write freely. Was not this gift of education for the people devised and bestowed by the Church? Was it not

one of the more salient of those features of European civilisation which were so confidently ascribed to the advent of Christianity? There was no possibility of ignoring the witness of Pompeii. The clear-cut marble slabs at every street corner indicated a general average of literacy. The election-addresses to the workers of ancient Pompeii, which were discovered on the walls, recalled a picture of eager groups of wine and fruit vendors gathering in their dusty tunics to read the rhetorical appeals. Two thousand years ago the bulk of the workers in a Roman town could read, write, and cipher. The introduction of general elementary education in the nineteenth century was not a new thing under the sun, but the restoration of a condition that had flourished in pagan days, and then lain buried under the ruins of paganism during the long reign of Christianity.

Pompeii was destroyed at the very beginning of the imperial phase of Rome's history. Pagan power had still four centuries to run in Europe before it was superseded by Christian power. During those four centuries a moral advance was made in the Roman Empire which is too often overlooked. The Romans of a later day came to look with pain on the vicious and criminal excesses of the Augustan age, to improve the lot of the slave and of woman, and to sow the seed of many a great reform. Political, physical, fiscal, and literary decay there certainly was; but with less brilliance and less strength there came a more serious attention to the sober virtues of the individual and the State. Among other things the schools of the Empire were taken under imperial supervision, and fine efforts were

made towards the establishment of a general system of elementary, secondary, and university education.

The "prejudice" against Paganism, of which Mommsen complains, has led us to ignore so completely the best features of the life of our pagan fathers that it will not be uninteresting to have a fuller picture of the school-life of those days. Let us choose a period in the second half of the fourth century when the shadow of ruin is beginning to creep over the unconscious Empire.

In the open portico or verandah of a Roman house sits the *litterator*, or elementary teacher, waiting for the arrival of his pupils. Work begins early, in those early-rising days. Before it is light, in winter-time, the Roman boys are led to the school by a slave of the household, who carries the tablets and possibly books of the pupil; much as the aged grandfather conducts the child to school in the quieter parts of Japan to-day. They troop into the open portico—though it may have canvas sides—salute the master, and take their seats on the little benches. Discipline is very severe. The strap and the ferrule are no idle ornaments of the place, and behaviour is generally as rigidly controlled as in a Japanese school. Reading, writing, and arithmetic fill the curriculum of the primary school. Books are naturally scarce, but the teacher has his copies of the poets and of the early Roman laws, and the art of reading is slowly mastered. Possibly the child has learned his letters at home from his mother, as in the old days, by the use of ivory blocks with letters on them. Then he must learn to trace the letters, and with his pointed

style he scratches his crude efforts on the waxed tablet, to obliterate them again by drawing the broad, flat end over the soft, white wax. For arithmetic he sings his "twice two are four" (to the great annoyance of literary neighbours, whose complaints have come down to us), much as children will do 1,500 years later, and makes great use of the crossed and outstretched fingers and of the abacus. So the busy hours run until the slave comes to take him home for dinner.

Elementary schools of this type were universal throughout the Empire before the end of the fourth century—so universal that the educational concern of the Emperors was directed almost entirely to the higher schools. Practically all the children of freemen passed through the elementary school. The fee was ridiculously small, the poor *litterator* generally supplementing his fee by another occupation; but later emperors concerned themselves to secure a "living wage" for him. Wealthier men had, of course, scholarly slaves to educate their children; but the little, ubiquitous *pergulæ* taught the bulk of the boys of the Empire (and very many of the girls) to read, write, and cipher. From the second century B.C., when they begin to appear in numbers, until the middle of the fifth, they form a great and comprehensive system of primary education, carefully watched, in later years, by the ruling princes. By the seventh century even Christian kings and bishops can only write their names by daubing the ink on plates that have the name cut out. At the end of the fourth century reading and writing had been ordinary capacities of the worker.

Then the Roman boy reaches his twelfth year, and the six or seven years of elementary training are over. For a large number education goes no further, but for a very large number the higher school now opens. Down in the forum (market-place) are the buildings with the white or purple curtains over the entrance, where the *literatus* or *grammaticus* plies his trade, and possibly announces it by a slave in stentorian tones. The middle-school teacher has an honourable and lucrative post. Almost all the Stoic emperors have done something for him and his work. Dioclesian has commanded the municipalities to see that he has a salary of 200 denarii (roughly, pence) a month, and later emperors have increased it. Well-known teachers are making huge fortunes, for the pupils pay a small fee in addition to the public ones. All teachers are exempt from the heavy municipal burdens that all other freemen must bear, yet share all the honours.

From these *literati* the advanced pupil learns Latin and Greek literature, history, mythology, geography, poetry, physics, mathematics, and a little philosophy. Parchment copies of the classics abound. Large maps hang on the walls. The teacher reads his passage of Livy or Vergil or Homer until all can read it perfectly, and then enters on a commentary, in which all that is known (and a good deal more) of history, geography, religion, ethics, science, and philosophy is introduced. He traces his circles and triangles in the sand, and teaches them geometry. What is, perhaps, more surprising to the modern mind, the bulk of the pupils are perfectly familiar with *shorthand*, and take

rapid notes on their wax tablets, to be committed to parchment afterwards.

Close by was the still more important school of the *rhetor*, or teacher of oratory. Gratian awarded him a salary double that of the grammarian, and he was a prominent figure in a Roman town.

At sixteen the Roman boy lays aside puerile things and dons "the manly dress." He chooses his profession, and may pass on to still higher schools to prepare for it until he is twenty. There is a very fair "ladder of education" in the Empire. State subsidies and municipal payments have enabled him to remain at the middle-school. If he is a rare scholar, he may aspire to the supreme schools (universities) at Constantinople or Rome, where twenty or thirty of the best teachers in the Empire are maintained by the State. A youth from Britain, or Spain, or Africa, may be sent up by the magistrate of his province, and fed and taught gratuitously at the imperial school. Strict watch is kept over him by the Prefect of Rome, and if he frequent the circus or the theatre too freely he is sent down to his province. Or wealthy parents may send him to the famous schools of law and rhetoric in Gaul, or to the technical schools of engineering or architecture.[1]

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[1] My account is mainly founded on Mommsen and Marquardt's *Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer* and Kappes' *Geschichte der Pädagogik*, two supreme authorities, and Denk, Paroz, Letourneau, etc. But the English reader can verify it in Compayré's *History of Pedagogy*, Seeley's *History of Education*, Guizot's *History of Civilisation*, etc., Smith's *Dictionary*, and Mommsen or Gibbon, or any good historian.

When the eye of the historical student has dwelt on the proportions and the fair promise of the pagan system of education, it may run on quickly to the Europe of two centuries later. The contrast is tragic. Here and there over Europe you will find the weed-grown roads that the Romans had made; here and there you will meet the ruins of the aqueducts and bridges which their energy had constructed; here and there the white ruin of a marble villa or temple will make a pale spot of light in the gloomy landscape; but hardly a single trace is left anywhere of the educational structure that, with a system of law, had been the most precious heritage of the pagan to the Christian world. In some obscure monastery, perhaps, a refined abbot has a tiny school where novices and oblates and a few—very few—outsiders receive an elementary education; but the great scheme of general and graduated education has been utterly demolished. Not one man in tens of thousands can read and write. Powerful monarchs and Christian bishops cannot put their own names to documents. The world must wait 1,400 years before there is again question of giving general elementary instruction.

The question how this dire result was brought about will leap to the reader's lips. Let me say at once that the whole answer will be an exceedingly complex and an exceedingly large one. It is part of the great historical problem of the making of the Middle Ages. The glib and grotesque reading of the history of Europe that was current until the nineteenth century cannot be seriously entertained to-day. The belief that Europe began to make progress, or accelerated

its pace in making progress, towards a higher civilisation when Christianity superseded paganism is not consistent with even a superficial knowledge of the facts. Europe descended into an abyss—lost all its art, its letters, its philosophy, its material powers and humanitarian dreams, and much of its moral quality—when that change took place. The change was accompanied by an earthquake that brought not only temples, but academies and schools, to the ground.

But let us avoid the equally unsound generalisation that Christianity was responsible for all this. Certain mighty forces that were quite unconnected with the change of religion happened to come into play at the same moment. While Christian prelates were zealously effecting the transfer of political favour, and extorting decrees for the suppression of paganism, a dark flood of barbarism was surging against the dykes of the Empire. People in San Francisco the other day had a vague consciousness of the weakness of their constructions, but they knew nothing of the mighty forces that were coming to a head underneath them. So people in Rome were vaguely sensible of their increasing feebleness, but did not know that Asiatic barbarism was falling on the backs of the Goths and Vandals, and pressing them into the Empire. With a crash the dykes were swept away, and schools and law-courts and temples were borne down in the flood. A great flood is apt to leave a morass behind it. The Hunnic and Teutonic invasions left behind them the early Middle Ages.

Chapter II.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

The fine system of education which the Romans had laboriously constructed went to pieces within a single century. Before the end of the fourth century the State, in the throes of financial depression, had to withdraw its subsidies. Early in the fifth century it had to turn aside altogether from the schools, to fight for its life against the invaders. Unpaid teachers had to close their schools, and look elsewhere for maintenance. The cessation of official pressure on parents and municipalities increased the demoralisation. Then the troops of tall, blue-eyed, northern barbarians poured over the provinces, foraging, plundering, killing on all sides.

In this depopulation and devastation of the Empire, in the tremendous shattering of the old life and institutions, we have obvious causes of the destruction of the school system. Do they exonerate the Christian Church from any share in the destruction? Historians point out that in some places the schools continued to flourish in the very heart of the barbarian settlements—among the Burgundians and the Visigoths, for instance. In other places the northerners took quickly and kindly to civilisation—as the Ostrogoths did in Italy. In nearly all places the barbarians

submitted to the guidance of the Christian clergy. Was it not possible for the Church to plead with them for the preservation or re-establishment of the school system? Is it true that the Church was indifferent, if not hostile, to education and learning, and made no effort to save the educational system?

An examination of this point will show us precisely: (1) in what sense education is a benefit conferred on Europe by the Church; (2) how, whereas no Roman priest had ever dreamed of aspiring to control the schools, the educational system of later Europe became so predominantly clerical.

What was the attitude of the early leaders of the Church towards education? I do not speak of the earliest leaders, who paid no specific attention to it (except that St. Paul's frequent disparagement of the "learning of this world," after his attempts to convert Athens, was much quoted afterwards), but of the later Fathers, who profoundly influenced the mental life of Europe. Nor need we consider the attitude of the Eastern or Greek Fathers. Several of them were favourable to education, at least as a means towards the better understanding of Scripture and a weapon with which to meet the cultured Greek pagan. At Alexandria, the metropolis of culture in the Roman Empire, some zeal for letters was inevitable, and a great Christian school existed; though this was emphatically a catechetical school and one for the equipment of Christian apologists. Further East, at Edessa, there was another great catechetical and priestly school. But even at Alexandria the spirit of

Clement was not maintained. The determination to extinguish pagan culture, instead of trying to convert it, gained in each decade. The murder of the aged and gifted leader of the Neo-Platonist school, Hypatia, and the destruction of the great Alexandrian library, marked the culmination of that feeling. Able teachers followed Hypatia (Kingsley gives all these details quite falsely in his famous novel), but the splendid schools of the city were doomed. However, we are not concerned with the Greek world, and we turn to the Latin or Western Fathers who exerted so deep and lasting a power over the mind of Europe.

Now, nothing could be easier than to show that the leaders of Western or (broadly speaking) European Christianity were strongly opposed to the schools; and nothing could be more unreasonable than to expect a different attitude from them. In the schools Jupiter and Venus still lived. They had taken refuge there when the temples were closed by imperial troops, or sacked and destroyed by the mobs. Among cultured Romans Christianity made very little honest headway, and the schools were felt to be the source of the mischief. The grammarians had turned priests, as they commented on the lives and doings of the gods in the Greek and Roman classics. This determined the attitude of the Fathers towards the middle and higher schools. To the elementary school, except that there, too, Vergil and Ovid were the text-books, they were indifferent. The more profoundly religious they were, the less store did they set by culture. It was one of those flowers by the wayside that the earthly pilgrim must not dally with.

Generally, it was a poisonous flower. The distinction grew up spontaneously between "sacred" and "profane" learning. For the latter the Latin Fathers, in their mature period, had nothing but scorn.

Thus, the attitude of the Christian leaders is as clear as it was inevitable. Many Christian writers to-day, who look to them for indications of a love of culture for its own sake (just as they look for anticipations of modern evolution in St. Augustine), betray a lack of imagination that is fatal to the writing of history. Even down to the fifth century Christians thought the end of the world was not far off. St. Augustine himself was very uncertain about it. At all events, no one had the vaguest approach to the modern Christian idea, which calmly accepts the astronomer's estimate that our planet will run for another ten million years, and grants that therefore it is as well to bestir ourselves in the task of improving our secular life. An ascetic detachment from profane allurements was the essence of their teaching. How anyone can imagine that they were faithful to their ideals, as they were, yet retained some appreciation of culture for its own sake, or for utilitarian and "profane" ends, is not clear. When, further, the whole culture and school teaching of their time was saturated with paganism, it was inevitable that they should be hostile to it. Every classic in the language was a pagan Bible. The Fathers made it their work to oppose one book—the Christian Bible—to the whole of Latin and Greek literature. Schooling must mean only a training to read this. The secular school was utterly and contemptuously demolished.

Education, in so far as it was destined to continue, passed inevitably into the hands of the priest.

It is hardly necessary to support this by any lengthy analysis of the Fathers, but I will give a few quotations, especially as some of the best recent historians of pedagogy are misleading on one or other point. Some years ago a French priest, the Abbé Gaume, tried to revive the patristic hostility to the Greek and Latin classics. The reader who has any doubt as to their attitude should read the interesting collection of quotations from them which Gaume gives in his work, *Le ver rongeur des sociétés modernes* ("The gnawing worm of modern society," to translate his lurid title).[1]

The attitude of Tertullian, the sombre leader of the early African Church, is not ambiguous. "After Jesus Christ all curiosity, after the Gospel all inquiry, are unnecessary," he said. He came to see in classical education, as Compayré observes, "only a robbery of God." And the note he sounded is more or less maintained by nearly all the Latin Fathers. Lactantius, one of the most elegant of their writers, ridicules all zeal for knowledge that is not found in Scripture. Not only the reading of Livy and Ovid is to be deprecated, but the most harmless occupation with the poor science of the time must be discouraged. Whether the stars

[1] The English reader will find the point well discussed in the article "Schools" in Johnson's *Cyclopædia*, and a fair statement in Compayré's *History of Pedagogy* and Seeley's *History of Education*. I have myself drawn on Kappes' *Lehrbuch* and the specific works of Denk, Eicken, Paroz, Letourneau, etc.

move or are fixed, whether the earth is a globe, how large it is, and so on—these are all matters too trivial to dally with. "How much happier should I be if I knew where the Nile rises, or what the physicists think about the heavens?" (*Div. Inst.*, Bk. III., ch. viii.).

The attitude of the two chief doctors, St. Jerome and St. Augustine, is not always justly presented. St Jerome is said by Compayré to favour culture in proclaiming himself a Ciceronian. The letter of Jerome to which he must refer has a very different moral. St. Jerome, the most perfect classical scholar in the Latin Church (even St. Augustine's Latin is very faulty), was constantly engaged in teaching Roman ladies, always with a view to the reading of Scripture in the original. But the letter in which he refers to Cicero gives an account of a dream in which he is summoned before the judgment-seat and asked if he is a Christian. To his affirmative reply Christ says: "Thou liest. Thou art a Ciceronian, and not a Christian: for where thy treasure is, there also is thy heart." He goes on to tell how he only obtains forgiveness on condition that he never again opens the work of a pagan writer! That is St. Jerome's most effective contribution to the then burning question of the school. He even forbade his lady pupils to learn music, or to listen to musical instruments.

St. Augustine was equally clear in his mature period, and he also is often misrepresented. Dr. Kappes, one of the best recent historians, represents him as moderate, but only quotes his *De Ordine* and *De doctrina Christiana.* This is most misleading, as the first was written before

Augustine was baptised at all, and the second (and most of it—as it says very little to the point) early in his career. St. Augustine's later works, which had real influence, are positive enough. Like Lactantius, he not only rejects pagan writings, but ridicules the most harmless desire for scientific knowledge. One of his biographers, Nourisson, says that "his teaching.....paralyses the whole effort of science, especially natural and physical science." In his formal *Retractations* he withdrew all the praise he had given to the Greek philosophers, and spoke of the greatest and noblest of them all as "that fool Plato." I have no concern here with the positive side of Augustine's religious ideals; but the negative side of them, the destruction of culture, is undeniable. "*Indocti cœlum rapiunt*"—"The unlearned take possession of heaven," was one of his later sayings.[1]

Later powerful leaders maintained this unfortunate attitude. Gregory the Great, one of the ablest of the Roman pontiffs in the time of transition, wrote a violent letter to a bishop (of Sienna) who had opened a school. "I hear," he said, "that you have committed the unspeakable crime of teaching profane letters." Nor would the great pope allow the excuse that culture might render service to Scripture. He "would blush," he said, "to have the Holy Word conform to the rules of grammar." So the teaching of the "rules of grammar" fell lower and lower. The chief clerical historian of the sixth century, Gregory of

[1] If he cares, the reader will find a full account of the evolution of St. Augustine, and of the transition of Rome from Paganism to Christianity, in my *Saint Augustine and His Age.*

Tours, writes a Latin that is full of the grossest grammatical errors. "But why should I blush for my rusticity," he says, in his work *On the Miracles of St. Martin*, "since the Lord, our Redeemer and God, chose, for the destruction of the vanity of worldly wisdom, not orators but fishermen, not philosophers but rustics." Yet even the able but unlettered Gregory could not refrain at times from the "blush" that he so ingeniously reasoned away. "Woe to our days, for the study of letters has perished," he elsewhere writes. Could he but have glanced two centuries ahead in the history of Gaul, he would indeed have mourned the decay of education.

The Latin world had taken thoroughly to heart the fateful verdict of Tertullian on the schools of the Empire (I quote it from Seeley's *History of Education*): "As the offspring of the pagan world, if not indeed inspired by demons, they are dangerous to the new faith." Compayré sums up the result in these words (p. 67):—

> If the early doctors of the Church occasionally expressed some sympathy for profane letters, it is because in their youth, before having received baptism, they had themselves attended the pagan schools. But these once closed, Christianity did not open others, and, after the fourth century, a profound night enveloped humanity. The labour of the Greeks and Romans was as though it had never been.

Before the end of the sixth century every trace of the Roman school system had disappeared. In the re-organisation of the Empire authority everywhere fell into the hands of the northerners. The type of the cultured Roman, who

would spend hours polishing a brief letter to a friend and days in composing festive orations, was gradually extinguished. Learning came to be identified with the fuller knowledge of the Bible and all its meanings which the layman need not aspire to. Of general literacy as an advantage to the secular commonwealth itself the very idea perished. And as the clergy came to find themselves immune from all criticism on the part of their grossly ignorant flocks, they themselves began to dispense with even the slenderest elements of culture. So late as the eleventh century a bishop of Laon records that "there is more than one bishop who cannot count the letters of the alphabet on his fingers." At the very close of the thirteenth century, when the scholastic fever was at its height, it was found (I quote from Compayré) that not one monk in one of the oldest and largest monasteries in Gaul (St. Gall) could read or write. In this dense mist of ignorance, crime and vice and superstition assumed giant proportions. Even some of the most reputable churches in Christendom drew coppers from the wallets of the peasantry by exhibiting, not merely fictitious bones of saints, but such infamous "relics" as the milk and hair and chemise of the Virgin, the blood of Christ, and the umbilical cord and other coarse and spurious relics of the Nativity.

. . . . . .

It is quite alien to my intention to indulge in moral and rhetorical reflections on this attitude of the Christian leaders towards letters, and on the appalling consequences. I have

merely to explain how the earlier idea of general literacy and secular culture perished in Europe. The facts I have summarised will be found in every neutral manual of pedagogy. It is, indeed, open to an enthusiast to argue that the ideal of other-worldliness which Christianity diffused was of transcendently greater value than the secular culture which it temporarily effaced. This essay is not the place for me to discuss that point. I would only observe that the ideal, however valuable in itself, seems to have defeated its own end when we consider the terrible depravity which all know to have accompanied the crass ignorance of clergy, monks, and laity in the early Middle Ages. I wish, however, to keep close to the historical facts and avoid polemical digressions. The Christian Church was naturally hostile to pagan culture, and it was—just as naturally, I think—indifferent about general elementary instruction. The only thing of literary importance was that its people should know the contents of the Bible, and it had a vast priesthood for communicating this to them. It, therefore, made no effort to arrest the decay of the old system of secular education.

But, amid the ruins of the old structure, the new system of ecclesiastically-controlled education was slowly taking shape. I have already referred to the great clerical and catechetical schools of Edessa and Alexandria. The institution was carried into Latin Christendom, and became the germ of the later European system, which we are slowly re-converting into a secular scheme to-day.

Historians of pedagogy with a concern to hide the breach

as far as possible contrive to give an air of continuity to the history of education from the fifth to the twelfth century. The discerning reader will, however, see at once that the two essential features I have noted are unquestioned. Secular education is entirely replaced by education under priestly control, for religious purposes; an enormous and connected system of schools is replaced by a very small number of isolated centres of instruction, which usually depend precariously on the influence of an individual. Denk, who tries to show continuity in Gaul (in his *Geschichte des Gallo-Frankischen Unterrichts*), observes in the end that "the aim was always sacred" in the new schools, and that, "after all, culture fell very low in Gaul." I need not go much into detail. Two sets of Christian schools came into existence, and these, with a few rare exceptions, remained typical for the next six centuries. These were the episcopal and the monastic schools.

St. Augustine was one of the first in the west to form something like a priestly seminary for the training of clergy; but the intellectual aim of it was very subordinate, as will be understood from what I have said of his attitude. St. Hilary had a similar school for his clergy at Arles. Other schools were found at Poitiers, Paris, and other places; but they do not interest us until they extend the advantage of instruction to the laity. This hardly ever occurred until the ninth century, when Charlemagne brought great pressure on the clergy, and then rarely again until the twelfth century. So there grew up in Europe the feeling—which would have seemed unintelligible to a Greek or Roman

worker—that reading and writing were the business of a priest.

More interesting was the development of the monastic schools. The great founder of European monasticism, St. Benedict, appreciated the spiritual value of intellectual work, and enjoined it on his followers. But no monastic body has ever existed in Europe in which the spirit of the founder has been long or largely maintained in its purity, and the reader must be on his guard against the current gross historical exaggerations of the literary and educational activity of "the monks of the west." The most sympathetic historians of pedagogy can find trace of only a comparatively small number of monasteries in the next six centuries where there was serious intellectual life within the cloister, and still fewer where the most rudimentary benefit of letters was extended to the laity. Monastic schools, where they existed, had a religious purpose, and they were chiefly occupied in instructing their own *oblati*, or boy-monks. Even the most distinguished Church-leaders sanctioned the frightful practice of consecrating children to the monastic life at the age of six, and it will be readily imagined how many of these children of a hot-blooded generation would do what they could to enliven the living sepulchre in which they found themselves when they came to manhood.

I will pass swiftly over the dark and depraved years up to the age of Charlemagne. In a very few places we find public elementary schools opened for a brief period. At three episcopal councils in the three centuries we find some concern about them. Here and there a spiritually-minded

abbot or bishop, looking out on the festering mass of ignorant vice, endeavours to re-kindle the lost light of culture. In the south of Gaul an ex-minister of the realm, Cassiodorus, turned monk, and founded a busy centre for teaching and the copying of what remained of the classical literature. Anglo-Saxon and Irish monks were honourably distinguished for their intellectual interests, and they did much for the coarser monasteries on the Continent. One of them, St. Boniface, laboured hard among the monks of Germany in the eighth century, while Chrodegang of Metz strove at the same time to dispel the gross ignorance of the clergy. These are the few gleams of light in that dark age.

But, whatever the intellectual fortune of monks and clergy, it is more pertinent to notice that the general education of the people had now utterly ceased to exist. A tiny school here and there in vast kingdoms, in the course of centuries, is all that we can discover. Then came the great episode of the reign of Charlemagne. When he had come to man's estate, crushed his enemies, and begun to study the improvement of his people, this Napoleon of the ninth century at once saw the value of culture. Seven feet in height and well-proportioned, the blond, blue-eyed monarch was not a less giant in mind, though he fell lamentably short of the Church ideal in morals. He gathered a group of scholars about him, laboriously acquired almost all the culture of the time, and founded an imposing school within the palace for his dependents—a numerous body for a monarch who had nine wives. He then brought his vast

energy to bear upon the reform of the clergy and the monks, and forced them to open schools everywhere for the education of the people. Seconded by the gifted English priest Alcuin, he framed an excellent system of schools throughout his dominions. Every parish priest and every monastery was to have a school for public instruction. Certainly it was his aim to have his people thoroughly grounded in religion, but he was founding a structure of education that would have hastened the development of Europe by many centuries if it had been completed and maintained; and his ultimate aim was the secular good of his kingdom.

History and biography tell the story of his splendid failure. During his lifetime the reluctance and indolence of the body of the clergy and monks were drastically overcome, but his work quickly perished after his death. His son made some effort to sustain his institution, but all his later successors fell entirely away, and so did most of the clergy.[1] Three years after his death the French bishops decreed in synod at Aix-la-Chapelle, his capital, that the monastic schools need not receive any more day-pupils. The parochial schools were almost entirely abandoned. We only discover the faintest traces of them during the following four centuries. What our own great Alfred did—for the nobles—in England a little later is well known; but

[1] "The clergy, who had entertained but little sympathy or the enterprises of the emperor, soon closed the monasteries to outside students, and returned to the vicious practices from which the authority and energy of Charlemagne had aroused them." (Dr. Seeley, *History of Education*, p. 128.)

his work proved equally transitory. The famous Irish scholar (and heretic), Scotus Erigena, made an effort to withdraw higher education, in part, from the baneful care of the clergy; but his fate is written in history. The dark night settled over nearly the whole of Europe once more, as far as the mass of the people were concerned.

I have said nearly the whole of Europe, because there was one brilliant exception. Spain was at this time flooded with the light of culture, and the far reflection of its splendour was re-awakening the demand for learning in the Christian realms. We have seen how the intellectual and educational history of Europe was broken off in the fifth century. We shall see presently how it was re-commenced in the eleventh and twelfth, though at a much lower level. It is one of the romances of history how the later activity is directly connected, in a most circuitous way, with "the splendour that was Greece and the glory that was Rome," in spite of the awful cataclysm between the two. My purpose will only permit me to say a few words about this.

Among the many heretics of the early Church whom most of us have been taught to think very darkly of was Nestorius. This great Eastern bishop, of the fifth century, was a ripe Greek scholar and follower of Aristotle. Cast out of orthodox Christendom for denying the new-formed dogma of the Trinity and the new Mariolatry, Nestorius and his followers devoted themselves to quiet culture in Syria, and translated the Greek and Latin classics into Syriac. With them were soon associated those other great Unitarian outcasts, the Jews; and Mohammed and his early followers,

equally monotheistic, learned to respect and cultivate them. When the rudeness of the first Mohammedan campaigns was over, their rulers became zealous patrons of education and learning. By the middle of the seventh century the great Greek and Roman writers were available in Arabic and keenly discussed. Haroun al Raschid commanded that a school should be attached to every mosque in his dominions. The copying and making of books went on throughout the Mohammedan world with a zeal far beyond that of the most industrious "monks of the West," and vast libraries were formed. The Cairo library had 100,000 volumes; the Spanish royal library 600,000. There were 70 public libraries in Andalusia alone. To each library was attached a translating and copying college. Schools were opened on all sides, and teachers and poor scholars were most liberally assisted. It was the Saracens of Spain who founded the first medical college in Europe and the first astronomical observatory.

I am only concerned with this in so far as it affected the snail-like progress of the cause of secular education in Europe at large. Jewish pedlars and wandering scholars brought the new works, re-translated into Latin and accompanied by the learned additions of the Arabian scientists, poets, and philosophers, across the Pyrenees. Great Christian teachers crossed the mountains themselves to learn wisdom in the pagan schools of Spain. By the end of the eleventh century there was a very considerable intellectual activity in Christendom. Although Charlemagne's great scheme had fallen to pieces, a number of the

rich monasteries and of the Bishops continued to maintain schools. Dialectics (or logic) began to be cultivated, able teachers sprang up here and there, and the famous story of the wandering scholars of Europe began. Shouldering their scanty wallets, earning their bread as they travelled by playing on the flute or the guitar, youths from England, Poland, Germany, France, and Italy made their way along the rough roads of Europe, and fed the growing passion for dialectical displays. This school-life grew up spontaneously in the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries. Most of the monasteries in Europe were—as numbers of contemporary clerics assure us—still grossly corrupt; but this at times led to further intellectual freedom. At the same time a number of deeply religious bishops (like Ivo of Chartres) zealously aided the revival of learning.

In the twelfth century the rise of brilliant teachers like Pierre Abélard gave an immense impetus. The episcopal school of Paris where he taught saw a sudden rise in the number of its scholars from about 300 to 20,000. Independent schools, with lay teachers, were licensed. Even schools for women were timidly opened. Queens and ladies corresponded in elegant Latin with learned prelates. The foundations of the great universities were laid, and the general culture set afoot which brought forth an Albertus Magnus, a Roger Bacon, and a Dante. Europe was now, in the twelfth century, in full enjoyment of the famous intellectual ferment which is characteristic of medieval Christianity.

It would be ungenerous to enlarge on the sterility of

most of the new culture, and it would take me too far afield to enter into the picturesque details of school-life at this period.[1] With two observations I bring this phase to a conclusion. The first is that scholars still formed a class apart in the community, and no one had any appreciation of the old Roman and the modern European ideal of educating the mass of the people. The second is that people seem to have most inflated notions sometimes of the service rendered by the monks in "preserving the classics." Until Jewish and Moorish translators brought them, the Middle Ages had not a single work of Aristotle's except his *Dialectics*, and not a single work of Plato's (with the very doubtful exception of the *Timæus*). This fact alone will enable the student to see what the world would have lost if we had had to rely on the monk-copyists. We may be grateful for what they did, but one is bound to protest against the exorbitant and slipshod claims of many Catholic writers.

[1] I have given a full picture of this in my *Peter Abélard*.

Chapter III.

THE REVIVAL OF SECULAR EDUCATION

The rapid sketch of the evolution of education in Europe, which I have given in the previous chapter, was necessary for the purpose of my study. We have to-day the spectacle of the secular powers, once more convinced of the civic and national benefit of education, slowly removing it again from its religious basis and from clerical control. Their aim is generally resisted by our ecclesiastical powers, and our educational problem is greatly complicated by this conflict. It seems to me that one can take a more intelligent interest in the struggle when one realises that education was, originally, purely secular in Europe, and that the nineteenth century merely returned to an ideal that had once before been realised with conspicuous success. At all events, it must help us to know how education came to be grounded on a religious foundation. It was not from any conviction that it would be more morally effective, but because secular culture, which we now prize once more, was suffered to fall into contempt, and the sole use of written language was declared to be a religious one.

We have now to see how the old feeling of intellectual culture for its own sake, or for secular advantages, returned to Europe, and education entered upon its modern phase.

At this point I must drop all allusion to higher schooling and culture. Thought and learning continued, with many martyrdoms, to break away from clerical control, until it became possible for men like Hume and Gibbon, Voltaire and Rousseau, to pen their works in Christian lands. That is not my story. I have to show how secular powers returned to the position of the Roman emperors, and how a general system of elementary education was again set up. Then we must examine in detail the success of this scheme of education in countries where it has been strictly secularised once more.

So far only an occasional ruler has betrayed an appreciation of the civic value of education, and only they and a few scholars and priests have wished to dispel the ignorance of the masses. The great movement known as the Renaissance, when Europe was stimulated once more by contact with Greek ideas, sowed the seeds of the new feeling. The Italian humanists, led by Petrarch and Boccaccio, helped to instil into the townsfolk of Italy and France a desire to peep into the closed world of letters. The northern humanists, chiefly Reuchlin and Erasmus, pointedly advocated the general opening of schools for the people. Though the papacy had now passed from a narrow and vicious orthodoxy to a too wide and vicious liberalism and semi-paganism, the movement bore little fruit for the people. The clergy generally were hostile; and indeed the new culture in Italy was openly licentious. On the eve of the Reformation school-life had ebbed once more to a very low point in Europe.

Then came the great religious revolution and counter-revolution which inaugurate the modern period. Compayré says :—

> To the Protestant Reformation—to Luther in the sixteenth and Comenius in the seventeenth century—must be ascribed the honour of having first organised primary schools for the people. In its origin the primary school is the child of Protestantism, and its cradle was the Reformation.

This must be understood in the light of what we have already seen, and will yet see, and then it may be fully accepted. At all events, the chief Reformers advocated general education. With a more enlightened view of the interest of religion, Luther felt that the gross immorality that had hitherto prevailed in Europe was not unconnected with the general ignorance. He advocated that primary schools should be opened everywhere; that they should be made a charge on the public treasury; and that mathematics (which was regarded as a black art in the Middle Ages) and history should be taught as well as the Bible. Calvin and Melanchthon also urged the general establishment of primary schools. Nor were the secular princes whom they directed slow to carry out their designs.

At the same time a brilliant statesman arose in the Catholic Church who saw the same truth in his own way. This was Ignatius of Loyola. His famous congregation of the Jesuits was not founded for the spiritual care of the rich or for the conduct of ecclesiastical intrigue, but for the education of the young. It soon spread a network of schools over Catholic Europe. By the eighteenth century

the Jesuits controlled 24 universities, 157 training-schools for teachers, and 612 colleges. Other religious men joined in the work, the Abbé de la Salle, the founder of the Christian schools, being one of the most prominent.

On the Continent the work of the Reformers was almost destroyed soon after it had been begun. Germany was scourged by the terrible religious wars of the seventeenth century, and the school activity was utterly demoralised. When we remember that the population of the German Empire went down from thirty to twelve millions in the course of the century we can easily understand this. But the masses themselves were now rapidly approaching the stage of self-consciousness, and the new age of democracy was to settle the question for ever. In the throes of the French Revolution, and the agitation it communicated to the whole civilised world, the doom of the old order was pronounced. It would be hopeless to attempt here, even in the barest outline, to show how the modern systems of education emerged; but my purpose will be sufficiently served by a brief account of the struggle for secular and general education in England before we glance at the effect of purely secular instruction in France and elsewhere.

My chief aim here, for the purpose of this essay, must be to show the attitude of the clergy during the efforts to secularise, enlarge, and extend education. The material for doing this is, on the whole, still scattered throughout the biographies and memories of the period; but a sufficient idea can be gathered from Holman's *English National*

Education, which is by no means unsympathetic to the clergy.

Up to the time of the Reformation hardly any schools existed in this country except those attached to monasteries and bishoprics. Henry VIII. conveniently noticed that the monasteries grossly neglected their school duties, and confiscated (partly on this ground) their revenues, but omitted to apply them to educational ends. Grammar-schools, however, with private endowments, began to multiply; and in the eighteenth century a Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge founded 2,000 schools for the elementary instruction—primarily religious—of the poor. The aim was, the Bishop of London explained in a charity sermon in 1714, "to fit the child for its inferior station," and care would be taken not to "instil pride" by teaching too much. The teachers are described as "a sorry set." In the early part of the nineteenth century higher ideas of education, echoes of the cry of Froebel and Pestalozzi, were warmly discussed in liberal groups like the Philosophical Society at Manchester, where Dalton, Robert Owen, Lancaster, and other reformers met. Then began the long struggle for secular education.

I will defer for the moment the account of Owen's wonderful success. Lancaster, a Quaker, founded in 1808 a British and Foreign School Society, with a large number of undenominational elementary schools—an early anticipation of Birrelligion. The Church people quickly scented heresy, and Dr. Bell founded for them, in 1811, the denominational National Schools Society. England rang

with their mutual anathemas, much as in the year 1906. The aim was still largely religious, and, in the latter case at least, quite untainted by democratic aspirations. The National Society declared that "its sole object in view was to communicate to the poor generally.....such knowledge and habits as are sufficient to guide them through life, in their proper station, especially to teach the doctrines of religion according to the principles of the Established Church."[1] No book was read except the Bible, and geography was restricted to Palestine. Even the arid elements of arithmetic were made to yield spiritual profit that would have surprised Colenso. "The children of Israel," the manual went,

> were given to idolatry, in spite of all they knew of God. Moses was obliged to have 3,000 men put to death for this sin. What digits would you use to express this number?

And the Biblical success of the following problem likewise was more obvious than its moral stimulus:—

> Of Jacob's four wives Leah had six sons, Rachel had two, Hillah had two, and Tillah had also two. How many sons had Jacob?

In the meantime desperate efforts were being made to relieve the clergy of the work of education. The demand

[1] Of which I was acutely reminded the other night in lecturing in a London club on "The Education of the Masses." A lady of some distinction in one progressive cause said at the end that "it was most proper to educate the masses, but not to such an extent that they will rebel against the condition to which Almighty God has called them"! Theism clearly *has* its consolations. She evidently believed that one section of the community was divinely ordered for ever to black the boots of another section.

of heretics, like Adam Smith and Malthus, for a Government system of schools was taken up by all (or nearly all—Cobbett was an exception) the humanitarians. In 1807 a Parochial Schools Bill passed the Commons, but was thrown out by the Lords—who had just passed a grant of £23,700 for the founding of English Protestant schools in Ireland. The spiritual lords were not less vehemently opposed to it than the temporal. It was declared that religion would be endangered if education were taken out of the hands of the clergy. The Archbishop of Canterbury led the opposition in the Lords. Brougham secured the appointment of an educational committee, but he was assailed with the most extraordinary violence when he proposed that it should make an inquiry into the use of existing educational endowments. The clergy strongly opposed him; while noble lords declared that they would not let him come near their houses, even to weed their gardens—a not unhappy figure of speech. He only succeeded in framing a Bill by giving full control to the Church, and it was immediately wrecked by the Nonconformists, who had now much increased. The triple struggle of much dogma, little dogma, and no dogma had begun.

True reformers looked on with concern as the fight for the education of the people was distorted into a sectarian squabble and a struggle for the retention of ecclesiastical prestige. After thirteen centuries of Christian influence the moral condition of England was repulsive. The novels of Thackeray give one a discreet and restricted view of the state of the "classes," while the general condition of the "masses"

was indescribably coarse and vicious. Two working-men champions of a later date, Ludlow and Jones, give us a candid picture of it in their *Progress of the Working Classes*. Drink, gambling, and impurity, the typical social vices, were immeasurably worse than they are to-day.

> An almost general unchastity prevailed..... Drink was the mainspring of enjoyment. When Saturday evening came indulgences began which continued till Sunday evening. Fiddles were to be heard on all sides, and limp-looking men and pale-faced women thronged the public-houses, and reeled and jigged till they were turned, drunk and riotous, into the streets at most unreasonable hours. On the Sunday morning the public-houses were again thronged, that the thirst following the indulgence of the night might be quenched.

This foul condition of things was being partly met by the growth of Methodism, and by a spiritual revival within the somnolent and degraded clergy of the Church of England. But a number of thoughtful men saw that education needed to be taken out of hands that were only actively set to work when pressure was brought on them, and that the training of character must be placed on a neutral and scientific base. Smith, Malthus, Bentham, Owen, Place, and other reformers, pleaded almost in vain. Place and Owen went among the workers and stimulated them to self-help. Mechanics' institutes and similar establishments sprang up here and there; but these in turn excited the hostility of priests and aristocrats. A writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* voiced the protest in saying that this too advanced education tended to make the workers discontented, and that the only proper education for the poor was a religious

instruction, which "renders them patient, humble, and moral, and relieves the hardship of their present lot by the prospect of a bright eternity." We must beware of thinking that this warning about the excitement of discontent was a mere pretext on the part of the clergy to cover their determination to retain power. It was very genuine, and was well calculated to earn for them the support of political power that rested on the notorious basis it did before the passing of the Reform Bill. But it is clear, and it must be carefully borne in mind, that the gist of the clerical activity was a determination that education should not pass from their hands. In those days it was somewhat premature and incongruous to raise the alarm of possible moral degeneration if education were secularised. The people were still too near the bottom of the abyss.

One splendid educational episode gleams out of the prevailing gloom at this period. Robert Owen, an atheist, had taken a keen part in the Manchester discussions on education with Dalton, Coleridge, Lancaster, and others. Appointed to the management of a large industrial concern at New Lanark, and ultimately becoming one of the chief proprietors, he determined to give the world an object-lesson in purely secular education. The industrial community that lived round the mills consisted of two or three thousand souls—if the term can be applied to them without irony. The early mill-workers were drawn from the lowest sections of the population, and their life was a dull round of long and heavy toil and sordid dissipation. Forced as children of seven or eight years to work from

ten to fourteen hours a day, treated with a brutality that equalled the proceedings on the cotton plantations, they grew up into a most vicious caricature of manhood and womanhood. On this most unpromising material Owen made his famous experiment.

He dispensed with the aid of the clergy in his community, and dismissed the publicans. He rebuilt the squalid homes of the workers, provided bright institutes and reading-rooms, and gradually reduced vice and crime to a degree that had no parallel in Europe. He refused to admit the young children into his mills, and built for them the finest schools in Europe. The most enlightened ideas of education—such as teaching by the eye as well as by the ear—were applied, and the curriculum of the higher standards included physiography, astronomy, geography, mathematics, zoology, botany, mineralogy, agriculture, manufacture, architecture, drawing, music, chemistry, and history. The Bible was excluded as unsuitable for the use of children, and no religious teaching of any kind whatever was given. Particular attention was paid to the training of character on humanitarian grounds.

The experiment lasted nearly thirty years (1800–1828), so that there could be no question of a momentary effect. There was so little coercion felt by the redeemed workers that when Owen returned to his mill after an attempt to dislodge him, half-way through the experiment, they took the horses from his carriage and gave him a princely welcome. Further, in fifteen years he made a profit of £300,000 for himself and his partners, in spite of his enormous expenditure on housing, education, etc. It was

a fair and complete experiment, on the most stubborn material, and one that those who honestly fear secular education would do well to study.

The experiment was crowned with the most complete success. Crime was eliminated until the presence of police in the community became superfluous, and the standard of intelligence and morality among the children became the talk of Europe. The Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia invited Owen to come and found similar institutions in his own country. The Prussian Government sent a deputation to New Lanark, and the lesson they learned there was not an insignificant factor in the making of Prussia's famous school-system. The Duke of Kent sent his physician to report on the experiment, and became a warm admirer of the secular educator. Scotland saw a continuous procession of educationists, reformers, and travellers making for the model village on the Clyde. A deputation from Leeds reported that Owen's institution "dispensed more happiness, perhaps, than any other institution in the kingdom."

How the work came to an end—how, in spite of the unparalleled moral success, Owen's religious partners demanded the admission of the Bible, and in that and other ways made it impossible for him to continue—it is beyond my scope to tell. His thirty-years' experiment, moulding a whole generation with such marvellous result, remains to-day a decisive refutation of those who profess a dread of secular education.[1] One would like to know how

[1] Not that education alone did the work. Owen was one of the most comprehensive reformers of modern times. The reader can

effective education. We may be grateful for what clerics did for education in those days of Governmental neglect; but we cannot forget that their fatal doctrine of the essentially religious nature of education had led to this neglect of its first duty on the part of Christian States, and that their perverse continuance in their old idea was a source of endless mischief.

We have now reached a point where the situation of our own time becomes intelligible; and I may tell the rest of the story in brief. The gist of it is the gradual emancipation of the State from clerical bonds and the creation of a national machinery. In 1843 a Mr. Hume introduced a Bill for the establishment of a system of secular education, including moral training. In spite of Owen's vindication of that principle, the Bill was counted out. In 1846 Government began to make grants-in-aid. In 1858 these were increased to a sum of £830,000. In 1862 a revised code was brought in, and inspection enforced. And in 1870 the work entered on its modern phase with the passing of the great Education Act. Once more a democratic wave was moving over Europe, and its force was felt in England. But the story of 1870 is familiar enough. Mr. Forster found that only two-fifths of the children of England were on the register, and his heart was deeply touched at the spectacle of their ignorance. Amid storms of the utmost violence he carried his Bill. Radicals and Secularists attacked him for retaining religious instruction, and a large number of Nonconformists agreed at that time that it was not the State's business to teach religion. On the other hand,

Agnostic writers like Huxley[1] supported the compromise that simple Bible lessons should be given in the new Board schools. The great obstacle once more was the conflict of the Anglicans and the Nonconformists. When we find Dr. Hook, the Dean of Chichester, writing to Forster: "The truth is I have always regarded the religious question as a political squabble,"[2] we need not labour to analyse it. Forster himself, deeply religious as he was, wrote to Kingsley: "I wish parsons, Church *and other* [his own italics], would all remember as much as you do that children are growing into savages while they are trying to prevent one another from helping." But the language and the spirit of 1870 are with us to-day, and I need not linger over them. While educationalists have laboured with a religious zeal at the technical improvement of the schools, the war of the sects has not since ceased to distract them.

Many speakers and writers of the hour have contended that, since the Churches alone expended their resources on educational work at a time when the State was insensible to its importance, we must regard their claims with something more than logical rigour to-day. The claim is not an exaggerated one in the mouths of those who are wholly ignorant of the history of education. After our study of that history it cannot be entertained for a moment. We have seen that the Churches are themselves entirely responsible for the State's neglect of education. The

[1] Who lived to repent his attitude. See Mr. Allanson Picton's *Bible in the School*, p. 12.

[2] Sir T. W. Reid's *Life of Forster*, p. 496.

Churches claimed it for so many centuries as a strictly ecclesiastical function that secular powers which submitted to their guidance were gravely but innocently misled. The secular and civic utility of education was obscured solely by the mists of Christian pedagogy. The modern world's return to a highly developed and complex civilisation has brought back of itself the State's consciousness of educational duty. Nowhere was this consciousness inspired by the clergy; almost everywhere it met with their hostility. They had their own ideals, which I do not intend to discuss here; but those ideals happened to be gravely prejudicial to the realisation of the State's own ideal. The less we say about our obligations to the clergy in the matter of education the better. We owe them the kind of gratitude which a man must feel towards one who has—innocently or culpably—deprived him of his fortune, and afterwards allows him £100 a year.

The general character of the struggle of our time is likewise made clear by this historical study. Sixteen centuries ago civilised Europe had a strong sense of the importance of mental training and knowledge in the formation of good citizens. Then a dogma became generally accepted in Europe—a dogma which is now quite discarded even by religious people—that the stress laid on culture was illusory, and that a knowledge of the contents of the Bible, together with the narrowest technical equipment, was all that the citizen generally needed. We have returned to the old view, but it now has to fight with the lingering traces of mysticism.

Chapter IV.

THE RESULTS OF SECULAR EDUCATION

The mediæval idea of education has so far fallen into disrepute in our time that we commonly hear even opponents of secular education declare it to be "the only logical solution" of our problem. A long train of secularisations has made us realise that the mediæval State left a large number of powers in the hands of the clergy, which the modern State was absolutely bound to take back from them. The administration of justice is a familiar instance. In the twelfth century a man who was accused of a theft would have to fight a sacred duel, after Mass, and in the presence of the clergy, to purge his reputation; or, if there were no definite accuser, he might be plunged into a deep tank of cold water, blessed by the priest, in his parish church, or made to walk on hot irons there, to expect the "judgment of God." The modern State has completely secularised this and a dozen other functions of our social life. Its vital interest demanded the secularisation. May not the work of education be another of those functions which would be discharged more effectively by the strictly secular action of the State?

So keenly do we all now realise the immense importance to the State of general elementary education that the

conclusion is breaking into utterance on all sides. A large part of the teachers, said Mr. Birrell, were turned into civic servants so late as 1902, and he therefore proposed to free them from denominational tests. But, with that terrible illogicality which characterises the whole struggle, he hinted that denominational managers would be free to examine their "fitness" for the work for which they employ them; and it requires little knowledge of human affairs to see that one of the chief points, in "transferred schools," will be the secret testing of their denominational soundness. Why not candidly make them "civic servants"? So strongly was the feeling growing before the last election that the most powerful leader of the Nonconformists, Dr. Clifford, declared repeatedly that he was in favour of purely "secular" and "civic" training. It is true that he interpreted this in his own way, and that he quietly dropped the formula after the election; but its temporary adoption was a proof of the irresistible logic of the secular position.

Logic is an admirable and stately science, our opponents say, but there are other things of greater practical consequence. Mr. Birrell put the objection briefly and clearly in introducing his new Bill. "Where there is no vision the people perish." The nation was determined to have "idealism" in its training of the young, and so the system must continue to be grounded on the Christian religion. I will deal later with the suggestion, so profoundly unjust to some of the greatest thinkers of recent times, that there is no "idealism" apart from Christianity; and I will not dwell on Mr. Birrell's logic in emphasising his idealism, and then

going on to leave this religious teaching optional to the children wherever he was allowed to do so. For the moment we need only note the evolution of the mediæval idea. No one to-day dreams of disparaging lay culture in itself, but it is pointed out that the training of character is now one of the most important elements of education, and it is claimed that this cannot be accomplished without religion. Once more people are influenced by an inveterate association of ideas. Because the training of character has for ages been a purely ecclesiastical matter, they do not easily conceive it without the aid of religious ideas. The clergy were psychologists enough to grasp the situation, and the cry has been raised that the most dreadful consequences will follow the abandonment of religious lessons in the school. Secular education will lead to an enormous deterioration of character.

There are hundreds of thousands about us to-day who seriously believe this; and for hundreds of thousands more it furnishes a specious pretext for resisting the march of the secular principle. It is the only serious obstacle that can now be placed in the way of "the logical solution." The issue is in itself a grave one, and must be met gravely and frankly. If for hundreds of years the character of Europe has been maintained on a purely religious basis, it would seem that there is ground for apprehension on the sudden withdrawal of this basis. If Christian truths have been the sole incentives to right action for more than a thousand years, we should hesitate to dispense with them.

Now this feeling is a particular application to the child of

the general dread of "consequences" in the event of a decay of Christianity. Rationalist criticism has for years been met with this plausible anxiety, and the Rationalist answer to it is ready and decisive. Religion has been decaying in England for a good hundred years. Only one person in five now comes under the influence of religion in London to-day. The lists of communicants of the various sects show a proportionate decay of faith in the country at large. Has the character of the nation deteriorated in consequence? Quite the reverse. The sceptics who ask, "Are we better than our fathers?" have never made a serious attempt to find out. We have abundant material for doing so, and it is beyond the slightest question that England, and London in particular, are very considerably more moral and less coarse than they were a hundred years ago.

It happens that about a century ago the head of the London police, Colquhoun, wrote a close description of the moral condition of the city. The social student who needs encouragement, and the religious man or woman who fears "consequences," should read that work. London had then 50,000 prostitutes, besides private mistresses in abundance, to 600,000 inhabitants. To-day it has about 20,000 to 6,000,000 inhabitants. Gambling was then carried to the wildest excess in the open club-rooms of the wealthy and at every street corner. Drink was sold on barrows in the streets. So little was thought of drunkenness that there were publicans in London who exhibited the following notice in their windows:—

Drunk for 1d.
Dead drunk for 2d.
Clean straw for nothing.

The "gentry" cultivated drunkenness as an item of the daily round. The very clergy, Cardinal Newman says somewhere, were divided into "one-bottle, two-bottle, and three-bottle parsons." Children were treated with the grossest cruelty, and in turn frequented the gin-palaces in thousands.

Morality over the country was in the same condition. Nor must the reader imagine that this was a temporary depression. The prevailing coarseness was a persistent relic of the Middle Ages. We have now enormously improved the moral tone of the community at all points. Low as it is in many respects, it is better than it has ever been before, save in brief flashes of fervour; and a broad spirit of humanity and idealism, breaking out in a hundred humane reforms that the world had never seen before, grows throughout the community.[1] The improvement has been gradual and persistent throughout the century; its pace has doubled in the latter part of the century. When we recollect that religious faith has been dwindling through the century, and that the rate of shrinkage has increased in the latter part, it is surely preposterous to speak of the

[1] I would strongly urge the religious reader who feels this to be in violent contrast to his belief to read the Rev. Ramsden Balmforth's *Social and Political Pioneers*. This little work is mainly a series of biographies of the men who, in his opinion, did most for the social redemption of England. Only one of those he chooses is a clergyman —a liberal one, Kingsley. Only one or two more are orthodox Christians.

moral or social "consequences" of the abandonment of religion. We should by this time be in a position to distrust interested, and even disinterested, prophets. When Rowland Hill introduced penny postage, eloquent orators derided the idea that people would go to the trouble of buying and affixing stamps before posting their letters. When railways were introduced into France, Thiers, the great Liberal statesman, asked in astonishment, in the French Parliament, whether anybody believed the locomotive was ever going to supersede the stage-coach. When gas was first used in London, the papers were full of grotesque predictions of the "consequences."

At all events, the time has gone by for *speculation* on the consequences of the adoption of a purely humanitarian view of life. The real consequences are written in the history of the nineteenth century. Read carefully the relevant passages of Traill's *Social History of England*. Study Thackeray's or Dickens's pictures of English life a century ago. We must remember all this in the school question. Mr. Birrell's suggestion of the people "perishing" is an absurd bit of theory, utterly discredited by the facts. I do not say that we have grown better because we have largely discarded religion; but it is clear that our morality rests on a totally different basis.

Here, however, we are told that we have a great deal more than a mere theory to meet: we have a very formidable array of facts. In England, it is said, education has, after all, retained a religious groundwork. There are countries where the religious basis has been discarded;

where purely secular education has been adopted in the schools; and the result has been disastrous. Several of our journals have lately quoted figures and quotations in regard to the result of secular education in France, Australia, and the United States that seem to give absolute support to the professed anxiety of our opponents. The Secularist, it would seem, is an amiable faddist, who would ruin the country for the sake of logic. He has done it in France and Australia. British common sense is relied on not to suffer him to do it here.

I shall now deal fully and candidly with the supposed facts in regard to France and Australia. The reader will probably be astounded to find that the statistics given are grossly untruthful in their suggestion, and that a full analysis turns the verdict wholly and triumphantly in favour of secular education.

. . . . . .

I begin with France, where the *primâ facie* case of our opponents is the strongest, and where there has been a notorious increase of crime in the second half of the nineteenth century. Let me first state the case as it is put by one of the most industrious of the clerical writers on this subject. In the *Times Weekly Edition Supplement* Bishop Wilkinson proposes to show by "facts and figures" that the adoption of secular education "would bring utter disaster on our national life and greatness." In the *Daily Mail* (April 26th) the same writer gives the same "facts and figures," and shows us "leaders of thought in Australia,

France, and America in sackcloth and ashes." His "facts and figures" for France consist of quotations from an official document of 1889 (no details), a general comment of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* on the document of the same date, a complaint of certain workshop-inspectors in 1888, a passage from a French journal of 1892, a few words of a judge in 1889, the opinion of some former head of the Paris police, a private letter of an earlier theistic philosopher, and passages from French journals of 1892 and 1894. The last two plead merely—though he does not say so—for more efficient secular education. All the other quotations are nearly twenty years old! Why did the Bishop abstain from quoting "facts and figures" of a more recent date? Why does he deliberately choose a period when the French system was very imperfect and unsettled, and avoid the last decade, during which the effect of its settled working is manifest?

It is a way that bishops have when they are defending their influence over the schools. The average layman will prefer a more serious study of the notorious increase of crime in France, and I will give him *all* the facts in connection with it.

First of all, let us see something of the development of the school system in France. Up to the time of the First Revolution there was little more elementary teaching in France than in England. During the Revolution the apostate-bishop, Talleyrand, drew up a splendid scheme of education, and Napoleon afterwards partly realised it. The return of the Catholic party to power saw its gradual decay. Education was

discouraged; and in the end the grants were withdrawn, and 700 schools closed. In 1829 only one-fifth of the children between five and fifteen attended school. After the Revolution of 1833 there was a revival, and again after 1848; but little real progress was made until the final destruction of clerical power in 1870. After some years of attention to military and fiscal questions, the work of education began (1877). Laws were passed in 1881 and 1882 making primary education free and compulsory, and in 1886 the laicisation of the schools began in earnest. It must be noticed, however, that there were very large numbers of clerical schools down to the end of the century. In 1880 the clergy maintained 19,813 public and many private schools. In 1886 they had only 8,000 public, but 9,656 private schools. In 1894 they had seven public, but 12,715 private schools (with 1,189,190 pupils). They merely changed the character of the schools, and continued to teach a vast proportion of the children down to the end of the century. *For purely secular influence we must look to the latest years.*

Thus the Bishop's quotations nearly all refer to a time when the "secular" law had only been in operation a year or two. It is true that the process began more or less in 1877; but it was the law of 1886 that marks the effective change. Further, it is necessary, in justice to the anti-clerical republicans of the Third Republic, to remember that, though Talleyrand had prepared a splendid scheme, and Napoleon had set an example of realising it, the clerical party still grossly neglected education while in power. In

1868 more than half of France was still illiterate; and from the illiterate half came ninety-five per cent. of the criminals: of these criminals only ten per cent. were not practising Catholics. It cannot entirely be a matter of surprise that the anti-clerical republicans distrusted the civil and educational zeal of the clergy after 1870.

But let us now attack the question of the growth of crime in itself. It has been a subject of discussion in criminological literature for a long time, and it would be perfectly easy for a bishop to pile up proof of the abnormal increase of crime and pious comments thereon. Unfortunately for the Bishop's case, crime had been on the increase in France for decades before the anti-clerical republicans came to power, and, what is still more important, it has for some years been *decreasing*, though the schooling is now completely secularised. The former point is seen at a glance in a criminological study by Dr. Lacassagne, published in the *Revue Scientifique*, May, 1881. He shows that crime tripled in France between 1825 and 1880—that is to say, during a predominantly Catholic period. The 50,000 legal offences of the year 1830 became 150,000 offences by 1880. It is positively untruthful to ignore this great growth of crime under Catholic power, and to fasten on the ultimate part of the process, which happens to run into the republican days, as due to secular education.[1]

Now let us turn to the period on which the opponents of

[1] I need hardly point out that improvements in the police system and increased rigour of the law partly account for the increase.

secular education love to dwell. In our own country crime of all kinds has diminished positively by twelve per cent. since 1870. In France it continued to rise for twenty years, though the population was stationary. Particularly distressing was the increase in child-crime and child-suicide. Here was a superb opportunity for the religious moralist, and our bishops might fill books with their dark comments if they wished. Many readers will remember that Miss Corelli wrote a novel, *The Mighty Atom*, on the theme. Miss Corelli's knowledge of the facts was equal to her knowledge of modern Atomism. It is true that the criminality of French minors rose from 35,332 in 1881 to 36,975 in 1891; but this was only the last of a legacy from older and more Catholic France, which the Republic was slowly and devotedly mastering. Criminality among boys had quadrupled between 1830 and 1880,[1] and the criminality of girls during the same period tripled. It is true that suicides went up from 6,741 to 9,703 between 1881 and 1891, and that the proportion of child-suicides increased. But the number of child-suicides had already doubled between 1836 and 1880, during the Catholic and non-secular period.

Moreover, the slightest inquiry would have shown honest bishops and novelists-with-a-purpose that the phenomenon was not peculiar to France. In Protestant Holland the number of child criminals was doubled in twenty years. In Germany juvenile crime increased by fifty per cent.

[1] I take my figures for these earlier periods from the essay of Dr. Lacassagne, and from a standard work, Fouillée's *La France au point de vue moral* (1900). Both writers insist on this point.

between 1883 and 1893. In Italy the state of things was still worse. In England an official report, presented to Parliament in 1894, pointed out that our apparent exception was "due to a false interpretation of English criminal statistics," besides the fact that our reformatories kept boy criminals out of mischief, and our magistrates hesitate to commit them (*Medical Statistics of England and Wales*, 1894). In fact, the number of children birched in England shot up from 585 in 1868 to 3,193 in 1894—a fact that should have been under Miss Corelli's nose when she was perpetrating her *Mighty Atom*. With such frivolity and recklessness is the case against secular education conducted! Finally, in the last decade, which is the only fair period in which to test secular education, juvenile crime has diminished steadily and considerably, as I will show presently. Even in 1892 the proportion of child criminals was greater in Germany, with its rigid and highly religious training, than in France. In Germany minors (12 to 21) formed twenty-nine per cent. of the criminals; in France only eighteen per cent.

The question of crime in France during its worst period is one of great complexity. The French temperament has its weak and its strong sides, as Fouillée points out: the revolutionary strain in its national life acts fatally on the restless and nervous character, the growth of its towns and industries provided a more nervous atmosphere, the earlier inadequacy of its police is admitted, and the *personnel* of its Courts insufficient. I must refer the curious reader to Fouillée for all this. It does not concern me, as I will now

show that crime is steadily *diminishing* in France. I would only point out that even earlier *serious* crime was diminishing, and that the republican government had made a serious mistake, which accounts for much of the evil. A bishop or a novelist-with-a-purpose sees crime increasing after 1880, and at once fastens on the new Education Acts as the cause. The serious and honest social student would point out that, just at the same time, the republicans removed all restriction on the sale of alcohol (1880), and permitted a license in print and illustrations which has worked incalculable evil. Does any one doubt the significance of this? Beware of looking for social truths in episcopal articles and in novels.

But, after all, the chief point with every serious inquirer is: Is crime increasing or decreasing in France? The moral and civic lessons of the French code were ordered in 1886, and would take some years to reach a stage of efficiency. The Bishop discreetly quotes no "facts and figures" after 1889. Why? For this reason, given in Fouillée's standard work, which he may have seen: From 1889 to 1894 the number of boy-offenders (under sixteen) went down from 4,080 to 3,582, and the number of girl-offenders from 728 to 620. The decrease has been steadily maintained (while the population is steadily rising, contrary to a current opinion). I will tabulate the number of boys found in French reformatories for the last five years for which I can get figures:—

At the end of 1896 there were 5,023 boys.
" 1897 " 4,901 "

At the end of 1899 there were 4,037 boys.
" 1900 " 3,828 "
" 1901 " 3,568 "

In the same period the number of girl inmates has sunk from 1095 to 690. I have not chosen my years. These are the only recent figures I can gather from the *Statesman's Year Book.*

On the general question of crime in France of recent years the following table speaks for itself. Again I do not choose, but simply give all the data found in the last ten issues of the *Statesman's Year Book.* During the ten years I give the population of France has increased by 600,000 :—

LIST OF ANNUAL CONVICTIONS.

Year.	At the Assize Courts.	At the Correctional Tribunals.	At the Police Courts.
1891	2,933	216,908	447,203
1892	2,945	230,060	436,601
1894	2,795	225,466	448,474
1895	2,372	221,234	398,723
1896	2,404	212,827	415,402
1897	2,378	207,926	436,734
1898	2,226	202,898	421,066
1899	2,380	196,172	431,920
1900	2,248	187,024	
1901	2,078	188,002	411,087

From 1896 to 1901 the prison population in France has sunk from 8,771 men and 1,088 women to 6,097 men and 708 women. The entire number of men, women, and children detained in the country for judicial offences has sunk from 35,745 in 1896 to 27,039 in 1901.

So much for the honesty of the "facts and figures" which Bishop Wilkinson says are "more convincing" in the case of France than in his other cases.[1] For some years the new educational scheme in France was worked with too purely intellectual an aim. At the present day Dr. Hayward (an advocate of Bible-teaching) says: "I am told that their manuals of moral and civic instruction are remarkably sound and thorough." In my opinion, moral instruction is nowhere yet given with half the thoroughness that it should be, except in Japan. I merely claim that the statement that secular education has led to any demoralisation whatever in France is a gross untruth. Now we will turn to Australia. Bishop Wilkinson says:—

> Let us take the case of Australia first. Secular education was adopted there as the result of an agitation conducted by Nonconformist, Agnostic, and Atheist together. It was brought in with the best intention, and its failure has been recognised by the very men who introduced it, and who to-day would give their heads to undo the mischief.

This statement, and the scraps of statistics given below it, are even more untruthful in their suggestion than the "facts and figures" about France. In the first place, "Australia" never adopted secular education. The law and practice are totally different in the various colonies. Some of them have more religious instruction than it is proposed to give in our schools under the new Bill. Further, as every school-

[1] I must, unfortunately, add that the *Daily Mail* refused to insert my correction of his gross mis-statements. Dr. Paul Passy, a French Protestant leader, has lately answered, when Dr. Paton raised the same objections: "Personally, as a citizen and a Christian, I am glad we have secular education" (*Nottingham Daily Express*, March 17th, 1906).

boy knows, Australia is a new world. Living men remember the time when it was a dumping-ground for our convicts; later came the miners, not a highly moral class, and bush-rangers; to the present day we send out there (for reform!) our younger sons who have gone astray. Australia is emphatically not a country whose ancient history will be probed by a serious student. Yet Bishop Wilkinson gives no figures later than 1890! Why?

From 1890 to 1903 the general population of Victoria has increased from about a million to about a million and a quarter. The population of the jails has sunk steadily from 1,862 to 978 during the same period. The number of summary convictions in the Victoria courts is as follows:—

Year.	Number of summary convictions.
1890	24,494
1891	22,280
1892	21,624
1893	18,408
1894	16,440
1896[1]	14,759
1897	13,078
1898	16,987
1899	15,437
1900	18,384
1901	19,614
1902	17,086
1903	15,741

[1] I could not get the figures for 1905. Between 1895 and 1906 the number of serious convictions in the United Kingdom has risen from 11,911 to 13,736.

In Victoria 7,194 males and 1,648 females were committed to jail in 1904. In Scotland (with a population less than one-fourth as large) 39,360 males and 17,177 females

ERRATA

Page 64, foot-note. *For* "figures for 1905" *read* "figures for 1895."

Page 65, line 3. *For* "one-fourth as large" *read* "four times as large."

[illegible] larger than that of Victoria) the population of the jails is nearly double that of Victoria. Its jail population is decreasing; but compare the following record of summary convictions with Victoria's:—

Year.	Summary Convictions.
1890	48,102
1895	46,894
1900	47,017
1901	48,962
1902	50,776
1903	51,379

Yet New South Wales admits to the full that explicit denominational instruction for which Bishop Wilkinson, and Bishop Moorhouse, and the Rev. Mr. Fitchett, and other

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In Victoria 7,194 males and 1,648 females were committed to jail in 1904. In Scotland (with a population less than one-fourth as large) 39,360 males and 17,177 females were committed to jail. These are the results of secular education, which the Bishop says are "absolutely shocking." What terms should we apply to the Bishop's article?

But the irony of the matter has still to come. Victoria is the only colony in Australia with purely secular teaching. Victoria has by far the best record in Australia in regard to crime! New South Wales (I gather from the *Year Book* and from Levasseur's *L'Enseignement Primaire*) has formal religious instruction in every school, for one hour a day, given by a clergyman or teacher appointed by him. In New South Wales (whose general population is not much larger than that of Victoria) the population of the jails is nearly double that of Victoria. Its jail population is decreasing; but compare the following record of summary convictions with Victoria's:—

Year.	Summary Convictions.
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Yet New South Wales admits to the full that explicit denominational instruction for which Bishop Wilkinson, and Bishop Moorhouse, and the Rev. Mr. Fitchett, and other

writers on the matter, plead. Is it not quite time that English readers exacted a higher standard of veracity—the standard of "secular education," for instance—in their Bishops?

West Australia gives undenominational religious instruction for an hour a day, and the right of entry (much used) during school hours. With a population *one-seventh* that of Victoria, it had 12,758 convictions in 1903 to Victoria's 15,741. South Australia has the Birrell system of the Bible before school hours. Its record of serious crimes has run up from 82 in 1890 to 130 in 1903, with normal increase of population. It had 5,102 convictions in 1903, and a population nearly one-fourth that of Victoria.

I will not pursue the cruel analysis. Victoria's system is fully vindicated, and the credit of our episcopal authorities not far from zero. In 1900 there was an agitation in Victoria for the adoption of Scripture lessons. A little earlier there had been an agitation in New Zealand for the adoption of the Scripture Lesson Book of the Irish schools. A New Zealand correspondent of mine took their official criminal statistics for 1896, and published the following result in the *New Zealand Times* (August 1st, 1898):—

I.

Percentage in Colony of—		Percentage of Criminals.
Church of England	40.27	41.74
Catholic	14.07	32.95
Presbyterian	23.78	17.15
Wesleyan	10.44	3.0
Others	12.44	5.16

II.

Percentage of People born in—		Produce per cent. of Crime.
England and Wales	16.80	28.05
Ireland	6.55	20.61
Scotland	7.18	12.76
New Zealand	62.85	24.43
Australia	3.10	4.70
British Possessions	0.53	1.44
China	0.53	0.52
Foreign	2.37	7.49

We may close the question of Australia. Secularist Victoria has a splendid record.

I need say little about Bishop Wilkinson's third "awful example," the United States. Primary education in the States is by no means purely secular. Levasseur says that "almost all" the schools have Bible reading, though generally without comment, and always without dogma. In any case no one will seriously ask whether the United States is decaying or no. Statistics of crime in America have to be analysed very carefully. There are not only the coloured inhabitants to consider, but the constant immigration of illiterate Italians, etc. They offer a formidable and unique problem to American educationists. A glance at the prison statistics in the Census Report for 1890 (the last I have) makes this clear. There were then 57,310 white and 25,019 coloured prisoners in jail. Of white natives, of native parentage, only 6 out of every 10,000 were in jail; of white natives, of foreign parentage, 13

out of every 10,000; of foreign-born inhabitants, 17 out of every 10,000. It is the lands with full religious teaching that swell America's statistics.

Dr. Hayward, who advocates thorough Biblical instruction, sensibly concludes his chapter on America with the remark that "the American boy is at least as moral as his English cousin." He quotes a Bristol philanthropist, well acquainted with America, who said that he "heard more foul words in the street in one day in Bristol than he heard in three months in America."[1] A more important quotation is the one he gives from Professor De Garmo, a reluctant witness to the good result: "I think we need not be ashamed of the results in this country as compared with those in England, France, and Germany." Not many years ago the *Nation* said: "We believe the principle of the entire separation of Church and State to be the only wise and safe one for this country to adopt." And the chief judge of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin, in forbidding the use of the Bible in the school, declared: "Once admit religion into our public schools, and they will soon be destroyed."

The only serious opposition in America comes from the Roman Catholics. American writers have met their repeated attacks on the public schools in a very drastic way. They point out that in almost every country where the Irish migrate they form an abnormal percentage of the

[1] I quote this with diffidence. A Catholic priest once told me that, on visiting America, he was surprised to hear priests there swear fluently. It was declared to be a habit of recognised innocence some years ago, like chewing.

criminals. I have shown this of New Zealand. It is equally true of England, Scotland, and the United States. Harcourt pointed out that, of 8,034 people engaged in the liquor traffic in Philadelphia in 1890 (of whom 6,418 had fallen foul of the law), 3,041 were Irish and only 205 native Americans. Nine-tenths of the saloons in New York were kept by Irish. Dr. Dorchester made an equally deadly retort to their attack on the "godless" schools. He showed that, according to the statistics, the child trained in the Catholic school was three and a quarter times as likely to be arrested as the child trained in the secular school. More recent writers point out that crime (falling in France) is increasing in Belgium, Austria, Italy, and Spain.

I wish to avoid recrimination as far as possible, but it is difficult to avoid the retort when denominational writers make such unscrupulous attacks as those I have analysed in this chapter. But, before I sum up the matter, I must give a brief chapter to the most complete and brilliant experiment in secular education that the world has yet seen.

Chapter V.

SECULAR EDUCATION IN JAPAN

The progress which Japan has made in the mind and the feelings of Europe during the last decade is a remarkable vindication of its well-known emblem—the rising sun. But a few decades ago Europeans looked with listless interest towards the far eastern horizon, where some little-understood and half-barbaric nation lay below the level of civilisation. Then, after 1868, the first rays of Japan's real greatness came through the mists. Europe began to speak with some patronage and encouragement of the enterprising people who were going to imitate it. Within the last few years Japan has fully revealed herself, and taken her place among the greatest Powers of the world.

Superficial observers are apt to imagine that thirty years of industrious imitation of European ways has made Japan great. The enormous literature that has sprung up on the Japanese to-day must destroy this foolish illusion. Europe has taught Japan how to make twelve-inch guns, and bicycles, and power-looms, and so forth; it has taken to Japan the still greater blessing of a highly-developed scientific, mathematical, and historical culture. But this only implied a fresh application of an intellectual and

moral power that had long existed in Japan. National greatness is not the force of growth of one generation. Japan was civilised when Europe was in the morass of the Middle Ages. In some important respects the recent imitation of European ways has dimmed and diminished the real glory of Japan—her artistic and moral prestige. Japan saw that Europe had some secret of material power, of control over the great natural forces which it could press like genii into its service; and Japan very sensibly came to learn the secret. We are discovering to-day that Japan has some secret of moral power, and we would do well to inquire closely about it.

The secret, it is now well known, is Japan's moral culture; and this is precisely the institution that the secular educationist proposes to introduce into our schools instead of our Biblical or religious lessons, with their fiercely-disputed bases and their endless sectarian struggles.

It is significant enough that our Bishop Wilkinsons and other clerical Cassandras can scour the whole earth for results of secular education, and fail to see Japan. They talk of France, where even now there are thousands of disguised clerical schools; they talk of the United States, where 800 schools in a thousand read the Bible; they talk of Australia, where most of the colonies have ample religious instruction. But they never breathe the word Japan, where no priest ever sets foot in the schools, and no religious lesson is ever given in any shape or form. Why is this? When we remember the remarkable ingenuity with

which Bishop Wilkinson and his colleagues have made "facts and figures" prove that white was black in France and Victoria, we can only take their silence as an admission that the results for secular education in Japan are beyond the control of the most elastic conscience and the most subtle manipulation of figures. I will, therefore, deal as briefly as possible with the lesson of Japan. It is much to be regretted that no expert has forced on the attention of England—though all have mentioned it—the moral for us of Japan's success. Lord Rosebery has declared Japan "the object-lesson of national efficiency," and urged us to learn it; and then, instead of pressing on us the methods of the Japanese schools, he obliges the Archbishop of Canterbury by signing a petition for the retention of the Bible in our schools. Let us see if we cannot be more practical and more really patriotic.

The first point I wish to put beyond cavil is that Japan, although not an "immaculate country," as some sneeringly say, has been more successful than Europe in the cultivation of character. In 1871 Japan sent a large commission to Europe and America to inquire into the spiritual results of Christianity, and would gladly have established it as the State religion if the report were good. The commissioners reported, says Professor Hearn, that Christianity "had proved itself less efficacious as an ethical influence in the west than Buddhism had done in the east." This will sound honestly strange to many a European. I will let the experts of Japan speak for themselves. Out of twenty experts—English, American, French, and German—that I

have read, not one seriously demurs to the following estimate of the Japanese.[1]

Travellers were enthusiastic over Japan long before it began to mar its beauty by adopting chimney-pot hats and ugly trousers. The Jesuit missionary, St. Francis Xavier, loved it. A Dutch writer of the seventeenth century, Kaempffer, said of the Japanese that "in practice of virtue, in purity of life, and outward devotion, they far surpass Europeans." Nor have even modern missionaries, with all their failure to "convert" Japan, hesitated to tell the truth. Dr. Griffis, a distinguished American missionary, wrote in his *Religions of Japan:* "Among the influences that have helped to shape my own creed and inspire my own life have been the beautiful lives and noble characters of the Japanese officers, students, and common people who were around me." Dr. Munzinger, a German missionary, closes his long account of their good qualities with the words: "Who can fail to see these beautiful features of their lives? And all this has been accomplished by one man, Confucius. No one helped him." Confucius, we shall see presently, is the great Secularist, or Agnostic moralist, of the east. Lamairesse, a French Catholic, says: "In sobriety, personal dignity, mutual respect, and reciprocal benevolence, the

[1] Beware of the man who has "been to Japan." One of the French writers I read, Martin, warns his European reader that, if you go alone in the remote parts of Japan, you are apt to be followed by a crowd using offensive language. Now, as Diosy and Chamberlain point out, there is not a single swear-word in the Japanese language! That is a characteristic in itself.

mass of the people live above the moral level of the majority of the westerners."

If we turn to the standard English authorities on Japan, we scarcely ever hear a discordant note in the chorus of praise. Mr. A. Diosy, Professor B. Chamberlain, Professor Hearn, Mr. A. Stead, Mr. Henry Norman, Mr. Douglas Sladen, Mr. P. Lovell, and Sir Edwin Arnold are unanimous in declaring that the average character in Japan is far higher than in Europe. I will be content to quote the words of Sir Edwin Arnold, who was no admirer of the Confucian system :—

> Where else in the world does there exist such a conspiracy to be agreeable: such a widespread compact to render the difficult affairs of life as smooth and graceful as circumstances permit: such fair decrees of fine behaviour fixed and accepted by all: such universal restraint of the coarser impulses of speech and act: such pretty picturesqueness of daily existence: such sincere delight in beautiful artistic things: such frank enioyment of the enjoyable: such tenderness to little children: such reverence for parents and old persons: such widespread refinement of tastes and habits: such courtesy to strangers: such willingness to please and be pleased?

I am well aware of the shades of Japanese life. Cut off from the rest of the world, deprived of the stimulus of comparing national experiences (except with China), Japan long retained some unfortunate features—such as the repression of woman (borrowed from China), with its attendant evils of the brothel and concubinage, a poor and unelevating drama, a low ideal of commerce, and so forth. But even in sex matters Japan was no worse than Europe, and it had not the disgrace of sinning against its

own ideals; while the mass of the people are distinguished by a general sobriety, sense of honour and of beauty, cleanliness, kindliness, and gentleness, that we have utterly failed to produce in Europe.

And Japan is emphatically the land of secular education. Its Buddhist and Shinto priests remain in their decaying temples, and never dream of aspiring to set foot in any of its 26,000 primary schools or its colleges. No religion has ever been taught in its schools. The children of the more cultured are generally taught no religion at all, and even the children of the workers are not taught to regard it as a serious ethical influence. The code is strictly secular; the system was drawn up (largely on the American model) and is controlled by a body of statesmen who are nearly all agnostic. Their "grand old man," the Marquis Ito, declares that religion is "a source of weakness" to a nation. The Director of their chief college, Mr. Fukuzowa, the "intellectual father of half the men who now direct the affairs of the country" (I quote Professor Chamberlain), is the one who "leads young Japan in ostentatiously denying the importance of religious dogmas." As the missionary Munzinger says: "In Japan morality is a thing apart, quite dissociated from religion." This morality is the first item in their educational code.

The modern Japanese school system was set up after the Revolution of 1868. It is now a complete and most efficient scheme of primary, secondary, and university teaching. In the middle schools modern science is taught on the most modern methods and with the best appliances.

The great characteristic, however, of the whole scheme is the training of the character of pupils. Our chief aim, said the Japanese Minister of Education to Mr. H. Norman, is to inculcate three qualities—obedience, sympathy, and dignity. Thus, notwithstanding the enormous pressure put on the pupils by the addition of modern instruction to native work, the ethical strain is maintained throughout. In the primary schools the rich legends of Japan, the marvellous stories of its boys and girls and men and women in all ages, are used as moral material. In the higher school the ethical training is more systematic, and the *New Testament*, the Buddhist books, the Chinese classics, the writings of Mill and Spencer, lie side by side on the teacher's table. "Welcome every good thought in all literature," is the maxim. The *New Testament* and the Confucian *Li Ki* and Emerson are put on a plane. The principle is purely humanitarian. "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you" was the rule enjoined by Confucius several centuries before Christ. For the rest, he said: "Respect spiritual beings—if there are any; but keep aloof from them." There is no talk of supernatural rewards and punishments (though you will find quaint notions of hell in obscure temples). At the most, the eyes of unseen ancestors are said to be on them; though the educated Japanese do not literally believe in immortality, and their scepticism is fast growing in the masses.

In old Japan, when the artistic and ethical standard was supreme, the training of character was still humanitarian. The priests had their myriads of gods. Religion was a pleasant thing, a thing of picnics and pilgrimages and gay

festivals and playground temple-gardens. But the training of character was the work of the secular teacher and the parent.[1] The aged grandfather took the little boy by the hand and led him to the school of the children of the *Samurai* (the two-sworded fighters of the old order). "I learned two Japanese words and a story about a good boy," wrote a Japanese describing his first day at school. It is descriptive of the system. The Japanese language has no alphabet. Each character is a word, and years are required to master the whole of them. The higher scholar must add Chinese (which is equal to our learning five other European languages), as well as English and the whole modern code. But the "story of the good boy" remains, and is built on day after day, until the splendid spirit of the old *samurai*, the *bushido* or "soul of Japan," is thoroughly communicated. Professor Chamberlain tells a story of a Japanese youth who had to write an essay on Europe. He wrote: "The Testimony [Testament] of the English said that he that lost the common-sense, he never any benefit though he had gained the whole world." It was not a tribute to our proverbial common-sense—as seen in this education muddle, for instance—but to the Japanese training.

At the same time, one must take with a grain of salt Sir Edwin Arnold's assurance that the Confucian system is "common-sensible" to the extent of "materialism." It is highly idealistic, but thoroughly practical. Professor Hearn

[1] Certain Buddhist sects and some esoteric Shinto practices made active contribution, no doubt. In still earlier times Buddhist priests taught.

one day gave as the subject of an essay to his Japanese pupils the question: "What is eternal in literature?" They had never had such a question before, and knew no stereotyped answers. What would an English class of youths of seventeen and eighteen say on it? The Japanese boys gave (in substance) the following answers:—

> All that in human life and conduct which is according to the laws of the universe.
>
> The lives of patriots and the teachings of those who have given pure maxims to the world.
>
> Those ideas of right and wrong on which all schools of ethics agree.
>
> Conscience alone is unchangeable. Wherefore books about ethics based on conscience are eternal.
>
> Reasons for noble action: these remain unchanged by time.
>
> Books written upon the best moral means of giving the greatest possible happiness to the greatest possible number of people.
>
> The moral sentiment, without which the world would be only an enormous clod of earth, and all books waste paper.

These were the young men who were to storm the forts of Port Arthur. This is the secret of Japan's efficiency. It is a pity Lord Rosebery did not cry it from the housetops. It is the secular spirit: the outcome of purely secular education. But at least he did quote this saying of a Japanese editor: "Our country is our idol, and patriotism our first doctrine. From the emperor downwards the vast majority have no other religion." And in the book to which Lord Rosebery writes this preface *(Great Japan)* Mr. Stead says that the Japanese school-system is "the most valuable

example of the possibility of teaching moral condition and right living without dogma."

Japan might profitably send its missionaries to us, and we withdraw ours to work in London and Liverpool, on Japanese lines. At least, let us hear no more of the frivolous charge that people could not be trained on humanitarian lines. Let our clerics say candidly that they are fighting to retain their prestige in an age that is ominously deserting them. And let the nation at large take to heart the advice of Lord Rosebery to study Japanese efficiency, and adopt a system of training that promises a more sober and refined and gentle generation than any that England has yet seen. The great national religion of Japan, Shinto, looks with favour on the secular system. As Professor Nitobe points out, Shinto never had a doctrine of original sin. In its temples the chief object is a mirror, reflecting the worshipper. Like that famous Greek temple at Delphi, the first word it has for the incoming visitor is, γνωθι σεαυτον = Know thyself. Man's heart is good. Will anyone look on the picture of Japanese life and character and doubt that that humanitarian gospel is capable of saving humanity?

The English reader will find much about Japanese schools and scholars in Professor Hearn's books (*Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, *Light from the East*, etc.). More formal information about the system will be found in Mr. Stead's *Great Japan* and *Our New Ally*, and Professor Chamberlain's *Things Japanese*. Professor Nitobe's *Bushido, the Soul of Japan*, is the best account of their ethical ideas. I have mentioned most of the other good writers on Japan.

Chapter VI.

BIBLE LESSONS AND MORAL LESSONS

We have now seen the full reply to the two chief questions which I set out to answer. The first was: What is the real historical meaning of this lingering clerical hold on our schools, which is so gravely complicating and hindering educational reform? To that history replies: The system of education in Europe was once purely civic and secular. The Church, holding an ideal that brought it into conflict with the schools, allowed civic education to fall into utter decay, and persuaded Europe, princes and peoples, that the only education of importance was religious. The situation to-day is that secular powers have re-awakened to a sense of their duty, and are slowly but firmly insisting that the Churches shall teach their own affairs in their own edifices. The clergy naturally cling to the great prestige which the teaching of their principles in the nation's schools gives them, and they are urging all kinds of moral and spiritual pretexts to retain that immense sectarian advantage.

The second question was: Has the adoption of completely secular education in France and Victoria and Japan (and practically secular education in America) been followed by the "disastrous consequences" which the clergy assert? We saw that these statements are the very reverse of the

truth. We may now go a step further and examine the actual religious teaching given in our schools. Nonconformist leaders, like Dr. Clifford, have loudly protested that they wish the Bible retained only as "civic" training. Others, taking up the cry that Huxley raised (and retracted), want the Bible retained because it is "great literature." There is a growing disposition to admit the secular ideal, but make it include Bible lessons.

Now, here again we have to sweep away a number of pretexts and misleading statements. Rationalists generally recognise that the Bible is a most valuable and unique work. Parts of the Prophets and of the Psalms are among the finest moral literature of the past. The most exalted passages in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, or the Chinese Lî Kî, or the Persian Avesta, do not appeal to us with the same force (largely because of our unfamiliarity with their expressions and metaphors). The Bible most undoubtedly is "great literature"—not only great in its pure English version, but great as a unique record of a nation's growth from semi-savagery to civilisation. It is a great mistake to suppose that Rationalists do not appreciate this. But it is just precisely because we read the Bible with discrimination that we say, as Mr. Herbert Paul does in his *Matthew Arnold*, that the Bible is too good to waste on savages and children, and should be reserved for adults.

An able educational writer, Dr. F. Hayward, a strong advocate of the retention of Biblical lessons in the school, has given us a careful, expert examination of actual Bible teaching in his *Reform of Moral and Biblical Education.*

It is a scathing exposure of the hollowness of the pretexts alleged in favour of it. He shows that, in the majority of cases, such parts of the Bible are chosen that the element of *training* is practically absent, and the aim is merely to imprint certain popular Christian beliefs on the child's plastic mind. He analyses the syllabuses issued by six of the leading local educational authorities in England. In most of them—in most of our schools—the youngest children are given "stories from Genesis," "the Creation, Fall, Flood, Cain and Abel," and so forth. Would any serious teacher, who had not the Bible forced on him for some reason or other, choose the book of *Genesis* for conveying moral ideas to children? Surely it is beyond question that the aim is to imprint certain statements as facts on the children's memories—to teach them a certain version of the history of humanity.

And to choose just this version of humanity's history is a sin against the first principles of education. The time will come when the children will learn that these stories, officially imposed on them by State and Church, were in very truth "impositions." Religious thinkers like Sir Oliver Lodge now declare the notion of creation to be "extremely absurd." The narrative of the first chapter of *Genesis* is a totally wrong version of the earth's development. The notion of a primitive golden age and a fall is now admitted, in view of our undisputed knowledge of prehistoric man, to be utterly untrue—the reverse of the truth. It is admitted by all that there never was such a deluge as the one described in *Genesis*. Not merely "higher critics," like Canon

Cheyne, but opponents of the higher criticism, like the Rev. Mr. Sayce (see his *Higher Criticism and the Monuments*), declare these early stories to have been borrowed from the ancient Babylonians. Yet no teacher dare breathe a word of the truth to the children. Small wonder if we are bringing up a generation that turns sceptical and cynical of all authority, moral and civic, when it comes to learn the truth.

In the later years the *favourite* passages assigned for the children are the story of Joseph (an epitome of an ancient Egyptian romance, says Mr. Sayce), the Plagues of Egypt (abandoned as mythical), the story of the wandering (even Mr. Sayce says it is clear the Israelites were never in the Peninsula of Sinai), the marauding expedition of Joshua and the bloody massacres of the Philistines, the absurd and incredible stories of Elijah and Elisha, and so on. The most enlightened theologians reject all this "history" as mythical to-day, the entire narrative is coloured by the most primitive and crude moral notions, and the whole atmosphere is one of bloodshed, sexual excess, and semi-savagery. Only the most competent teachers, with the utmost liberty of interpretation, could draw moral profit from all this. But our teachers have no liberty whatever, and they are not themselves trained to exercise moral training.

I have before me the report issued by the London County Council on the examination in Scripture knowledge for 1905. Every year a full day is set aside in the London schools for this examination. Is it the duty of the inspectors

to test how the work of "the training of citizens" (in Dr. Clifford's phrase) has gone on? Not a bit of it. They must merely examine in "Scripture knowledge." They have to put questions like the following:—

What do you know of Caleb (*a*) in the time of Moses, (*b*) when Joshua was leader?

What people sent representatives to Israel after the fall of Ai?

What do we read of St. Peter between "the preparation of the last passover" and "the trial of our Lord before Pilate"?

Give an account of the visit of "the women" to the sepulchre.

Write out Isaiah liii. from the words "*He was oppressed*" to "*rich in his death.*" How were these words illustrated in the life of our Lord? [Note the subtle insinuation of prophecy, which even Christian scholarship has surrendered.]

Under what circumstances was Naboth stoned to death? Which commandments did Ahab especially break?

Mention the miracles worked by Elisha, and give an account of one of them. [They are always taught the vicious and brutal story of the bears.]

Account for Daniel's presence in Babylon. [The book of "Daniel" is an admitted forgery.]

Give an account of the contest of Elijah with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.

These are typical questions to be put by the inspectors of the greatest municipal authority in the world. They show that children of eleven have been dragged through the whole repellent story of ancient Judea, and that the concern of the authorities is that they shall retain in memory the "facts" of its history. We will trust that the teachers did *not* convey to the children any real idea of the nature of

those times, and that they did their best to wring some element of "civic training" out of *Kings* and *Chronicles*. But the report of the inspectors betrays their failure. "In discussing points of character," says the inspector of the eldest children, "there is a tendency to let the narrative run away with the answer." "Generally the questions that needed a little resource were not well answered," says the next. "The chief lesson taught in the parable was rarely given correctly," says a third. "The sequence of the Beatitudes," says a fourth, with delicious simplicity, "was frequently not given in proper order, and that led to *the wrong verse being explained*." The committing to memory of the chief "facts" of Judaic history is clearly the only thing gained. And if the reader will turn to the syllabus of questions to be put to pupil teachers themselves, he will very easily understand.

But what about the splendid chapters of the prophecies, the psalms, the epistles of Paul, and so on? Here let us distinguish clearly. The question is not whether they contain fine moral literature, but whether they are suitable for training children. It is incredible that any one should seriously say they are. They presuppose in the reader a knowledge of life, a knowledge of sin and temptation, that it would be tragic to find and criminal to implant in a child. Nothing but the most sparse selections from the Old Testament should ever reach the eye or ear of a child; and not even these if the teacher is not at liberty to present them (if historical) in the light in which leading theologians at least conceive them.

What shall we say of the teaching of the Gospels? We

may say that since not only lay experts, but a large number of leading theologians, believe the stories of the birth and resurrection and miracles of Christ to be fictitious, it is a mortal sin against the first principles of education that they should be taught as historical to our children. It is perfectly clear that the aim is to teach the Christian religion; that the prestige of the State's authority is being used to enforce narratives (like that of the miraculous birth of Christ) which even many prominent ecclesiastics openly reject. It is utterly useless in such cases to plead the child's spiritual and moral good. That will be better consulted by not basing his moral principles on stories that most historical scholars reject. The parables clearly contain much useful matter. But they should only be used on the strict condition that the teacher may speak as freely of their historical aspect as he does of the existence of William Tell. Mr. F. J. Gould, an Agnostic, has written two volumes (*Tales from the Bible* and *Tales from the New Testament*) which show how selections from the Bible may be used effectively in the moral training of children. Few would object to that, provided it is used conjointly with other useful books. But the present system of Bible-lessons is most obviously a piece of ecclesiastical pedagogy; is retained only under the political pressure of the clergy; and does not bear out in the slightest degree the contention that the Bible is indispensable in the moral training of the children.

Mr. Birrell declared that Biblical lessons must be retained in the nation's schools because "where there is no vision the people perish." Let him seriously examine the instruc-

tion given and the results of the examinations, and tell us in what the "vision" at present consists. Mr. Bryce and Mr. Lloyd-George assured us that the nation had, at the last election, "rallied to the Bible," the source of England's greatness, and so on. How a great historian like Mr. Bryce can lightly utter such nonsense is inconceivable. If by England's greatness Mr. Bryce understands the success of the marauding expeditions of Drake and Frobisher, the annexation and (during the first fifty years) sheer plunder of India, and such events, we need hardly discuss how little the Sermon on the Mount had to do with them. But if by England's greatness is meant her escape from the crudities of the Middle Ages, her growth in science and honest industry and commerce, her partial victory over the vices that long disfigured the life of our people, we need only point out that *this* greatness has been won for her mainly in an age of increasing scepticism. The kind of logic that says: "England is great; England has the Bible; therefore the Bible is the source of England's greatness," comes very incongruously from the lips of such men.

However, we need not raise the larger issues. Our Biblical lessons are not a serious element, from the civic point of view, in the training of our children. The fear of any serious deterioration if they be discontinued has no foundation whatever. We can well understand why France and Victoria and the United States have not suffered by abandoning them. When we in turn abandon them the only effect will be a strengthening of the authority of the teacher, the withdrawal of youth's chief excuse for moral

rebellion, and a sharper demand in the country for *real* moral training in our schools.

. . . . . .

What form is the new training likely to take? People do not care to part with even an imperfect instrument until they have the conception, at least, of a new one. Happily, the design of a new scheme is already before us, and every serious man or woman can examine it. We have not only the French code of civic and moral lessons, which Dr. Hayward pronounces "remarkably sound and thorough," and which has wrought such good results in the last ten years. We have a growing literature of moral instruction in our midst. The works of Mr. F. J. Gould (whose *Children's Book of Moral Lessons* should be read by all parents, and has been adopted in many schools) give a very good idea of the system. Mr. Waldegrave's *Teacher's Handbook of Moral Lessons*, Mr. Hackwood's *Notes of Lessons on Moral Subjects*, Mr. Quilter's *Onward and Upward*, Dr. Hayward's *Reform of Moral and Biblical Instruction*, Miss Chesterton's *Garden of Childhood*, and other works, are available. Mr. Gould has also prepared a pamphlet, *A Plan of Moral Instruction*, which will give an immediate idea of the aim and method.[1]

[1] This, and most of the other books, may be obtained of the publishers for the Rationalist Press Association, 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C. Other literature may be obtained of the Secretary of the Moral Instruction League, 19, Buckingham Street, Strand, London, W.C. I regret, however, that the League now aims merely at the adoption of moral instruction, and does not oppose the useless existing Biblical lessons.

I have not space even to summarise Mr. Gould's summary of the new scheme. It is sufficient to point out that we propose to give the children lessons on manners, morals, and conduct, without any reliance on supernatural motives or the authority of Church or Bible. The teaching will be carefully graduated, infants receiving lessons practically adapted to their life and condition, and the seeds of good thoughts and habits being systematically developed as the child passes through the standards. As general heads, Mr. Gould proposes the following: Self-respect, self-control, self-help; truth and truthfulness; kindness; mutual dependence and the social organism; justice; the work of the State and the citizen; co-operation and peace; study of nature; study of art; play. Where the Bible or any other work (say, *Æsop's Fables*) supplies the teacher with good material, it will be used. As a rule, the teacher will keep his eye on the daily habits, difficulties, impulses, and surroundings of his pupils. The history of England and the biographies of her finest sons and daughters will give rich material. The heroic deeds of the children of every nation and every age (especially our own) will inspire the child with sweet and high thoughts and noble ambitions. But, above all, the daily life of the child in its particular surroundings will be unceasingly touched upon. Cleanliness, honour, truthfulness, obedience, kindliness, work, and self-restraint will be assiduously, devotedly, scientifically implanted, and the child will be in the end prepared to take an intelligent interest in civic, national, and international life.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, with the object-lesson of

Japan, of Victoria, and of France before him, with the experience of Robert Owen and of scores of secular Sunday schools easily accessible, has declared this aim to be "folly." When will the laity learn that the ecclesiastic has a point of view which is not the national point of view, and consider these high matters more carefully? There is no room for random speculation on the working of such lessons to-day. Not only are they given successfully in the countries I have named, but they are given in 3,000 English schools to-day. No fewer than twenty-eight of our Education authorities have adopted them, and as many more have taken definite steps with a view to their adoption. "But it moves all the same," muttered Galileo, after signing the ecclesiastical declaration that the earth was stationary. We can give the same reply to the Archbishop's unfortunate gibe.

The greatest discovery of our time is that of the power of man. We are not fallen and accursed creatures. Our first fathers were the "gibbering apes obscene" of Mr. W. Watson's fine poem. By their strength and struggles they have built our civilisation. Looking from the height to which their age-long efforts have lifted us, we see infinite possibilities of betterment. We have the same power that they had, grown strong and subtle by the long use. We can maintain the character they have formed; we can carry it to a yet higher pitch. Duty is a law of this life, a condition of health and happiness. Work and self-control are the means to attain content and achievement. The spirit of kindliness is the ozone of the atmosphere we have ourselves to breathe: if we help to poison it, we suffer. These

are the indisputable facts on which we would base the character of our children. No contact with life or literature will ever shake them, as the dogmatic foundations of a child's good habits are shaken.

We Rationalists do not merely desire the abandonment of "Biblical instruction" at the nation's expense. We want this language of humanity spoken to the children by efficient teachers. Most of us have had our characters framed on religious grounds, and honesty has compelled us to reject those grounds. Whence this miracle of the world growing better—I will not say *because*, but at least *while*, it grows more sceptical? The foundations of character were deeper than our religious faiths. They lie deep in the common experience of humanity. On that let our children's character be at once, explicitly, and carefully grounded, and spare them the risky experience of having to change the foundations of their best feelings when they grow to years of discretion.

. . . . . .

But is the nation ready to adopt this "one logical solution" of our education problem? Statesmen have uttered blessings upon it, and then added that the country was "not prepared for it." I have put side by side our present scheme of Biblical instruction (with its constant untruth and its atmosphere of bloody fights and oriental sexuality) and a scheme of practical moral training (such as has made Japan great). The last objection to a change is that our people are unfortunately so attached to the old system that we are

powerless to touch it. Our very teachers, it is said (not by themselves), would rebel if they had not their stories of Creation, and Flood, and Joseph in Egypt, and massacres of Philistines, and heaven-sent bears devouring "forty and two children" for calling a bald man bald, and Ahab and Jezebel and all the rest, to teach morality with.

For the last time, let us get rid of cant. A Liberal minister said in the House the other day that "no Ministry would dare to propose moral instruction." Beside him sat his chief, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and it was not three years since Sir Henry had stated publicly at a great Liberal demonstration (at the Alexandra Palace, November 1st, 1902):—

> If we had our way, there would be no religious difference at all. We should confine ourselves—I believe nine-tenths of Liberals would confine themselves—to secular education, and to such moral precepts as would be common to all, and would not be obnoxious to people who do not come within the range of Christianity.

What has happened since 1902 to indicate any change in the feeling of "nine-tenths" of the people in power to-day? Absolutely nothing. Was it a rash and ungrounded calculation of public feeling? On the contrary, it was based on most positive data. One of the most important tests of public feeling was the raising of the question at the annual Trades Union Congress. The delegates, representing the mass of the skilled workers of the country, spontaneously and almost unanimously declared for secular education. On the very eve of the last election Dr. Clifford was speaking all over the country in favour of "secular education"—

a tribute to the general feeling, at least. Seventy-nine members of the new Parliament are solemnly pledged to support "the introduction of systematic non-theological moral instruction." The Northern Counties Education League sent a deputation to Mr. Birrell, praying "that dogmatic religious teaching should be omitted from the curriculum of all State-paid schools."

An expression of conviction of very great significance has been recently elicited by the authorities of the Rationalist Press Association. A declaration in favour of the giving of "secular education alone in state or rate-aided schools" was issued, and copies sent to a number of authoritative people. It protested explicitly against "any use of the Bible in such schools, except in so far as selected scriptural passages, of non-theological import, may be introduced into lessons on secular morality." To quote the list of even the most important signatures would be impossible. I can only note that it contains representatives of science and culture like :—

> Dr. Russel Wallace, Professor E. Ray Lankester, Professor Bastian, Dr. Beattie Crozier, Professor Browning, Professor Mackenzie, Mr. Sidney Lee, Dr. Furnivall, Mr. Eden Phillpotts, Professor Bury, Mr. George Meredith, Mr. Israel Zangwill, Mr. E. V. Lucas, Professor Westermarck, Professor Prout, and a large number of professors and doctors of science and letters, fellows of the Royal Society, etc.

Besides these I may select a few other names to give the reader some idea of the breadth of the feeling in favour of purely secular education :—

> Lieut.-General Sir William Bellairs, Major-General E.

Begbie, Major-General J. Jago Trelawney, Major-General Bedford, Earl Russell, the Hon. John Collier, Sir Henry Cotton, Sir Hiram Maxim, Lady Colin Campbell, the Hon. Gilbert Coleridge, the Rev. Dr. Aked, Dean Kitchin, the Rev. T. Haydn Williams, the Rev. Charles A. Hall, the Rev. Dr. Duff, Mr. Walter Jerrold, Mr. Morley Roberts, Mr. Joseph Collinson, Mr. Page Hopps, Mr. A. G. Vernon Harcourt, Mrs. Annie Bradshaw, Mr. Havelock Ellis, Mrs. W. K. Clifford, Dr. Gordon-Stables, etc., etc.

The feeling which finds its expression in "nine-tenths" of the Liberals and nearly the whole of the Trade Unionists on the one hand, and in this imposing list of scholars, writers, politicians, military and professional men, and even prominent clergymen, on the other, is not a negligible quantity. Many people have overlooked one very simple fact in their efforts to estimate the strength of this feeling in the country. Whereas the various clerical parties are highly organised, and have well-known organs and vast funds, the immense mass of the people who are now outside all the Churches is almost entirely without organisation or means of expressing its opinion. I do not mean that these alone are in favour of the change. High-Church ministers like Mr. Stewart Headlam, and Evangelical clergymen like Dr. Aked, and Nonconformist ministers like Dr. John Hunter, indicate a growing feeling within the Churches for a total withdrawal of religious teaching from the schools. They have sufficient faith in their beliefs to think that they can teach them themselves in their churches. But it is most important to appreciate that the general feeling of the community cannot be correctly ascertained unless a political

appeal is made on this explicit issue, and there has been no such appeal.

Let me illustrate it by a comparison. The statistics of church-going in London prove that the Roman Catholics in that city number only 120,000. But so strong is their organisation that they could easily command a demonstration of about 15,000 people. Throughout the whole of England and Wales they do not number more than a million and a quarter. Yet they are in a fair way to secure—or at least many politicians favour their securing—the remarkable privilege that the community shall pay the whole cost, not merely of their secular education, but of what they declare to be an invaluable sectarian advantage — Catholic teaching.

On the other hand, the same statistics show that all the church-going people in London (including the Jews) only number one in six million people! The statistics furnished by the different sects of their communicants and Sunday-school children show that, even in the country generally, those who are keenly concerned about Christian doctrine are in a minority. The bulk of our people give *absolutely* no indication of any interest in theology.

In view of these facts it is preposterous to say that the country is hostile to the proposal to secularise our schools. There is not a single indication that the majority have any such feeling;[1] there is the strong negative indication that

[1] As I wish to avoid political allusions, I will only briefly refer to the claim that such an indication was given at the last election. Every one

they favour it. There is at least the plain statistical proof, which any statesman can verify, that all the *organised* Non-conformists, Catholics, and Anglicans together do not constitute the majority of this nation, and they *alone* have protested.

Let us do the nation's business on national lines. Let the Churches conduct their work on their own premises. Whether their work be valuable to the nation's life or not we are not called upon to decide. Their fundamental doctrines are widely challenged to-day. The vast majority of our most cultured men reject them, or only admit them in a sense that cannot be communicated to children. Our Bible-lessons are an educational scandal in their authoritative imposition of disputed matter, and in their moral ineffectiveness. The salutary cry of efficiency is gathering volume about us. We are forging ahead into combats that will demand it of us. Surely it is time we ceased to use the national machinery for the making of little Catholics or little Protestants, and directed it, with single and solemn purpose, to the making of forty million healthy, happy, kindly, alert, industrious, and well-informed citizens!

of us knows how people who were strongly desirous of secular education were induced to vote for candidates who opposed it on the ground of a greater danger—the Free Trade or Protection issue. Liberal candidates who forced the issue in that sense, and now proclaim the result "a rally round the Bible," are introducing a dangerous attitude into politics.

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